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ON THE

NATIONAL CHARACTER

THE ATHENIANS,

AND

THE CAUSES OF THOSE PECULIARITIES BY WHICH IT WAS DISTINGUISHED.

AN ESSAY

WHICH GAINED THE PRIZE OF ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS, PROPOSED TO THE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,

BY

HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS

FOR VISITING THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF SCOTLAND.

By JOHN BROWN PATTERSON, A. M.

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EDINBURGH:

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TO

JAMES PILLANS, A. M. F. R. S. E.

PROFESSOR OF HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF

EDINBURGH,

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF SINCERE GRATITUDE

FOR THE ADVANTAGES WHICH

HIS ENLIGHTENED INSTRUCTIONS AS A TEACHER,

AND HIS UNWEARIED KINDNESS AS A FRIEND,

HAVE CONFERRED UPON

THE AUTHOR.

QUOD SPIRO, ET PLACEO, SI PLACEO, TUUM EST.

PREFACE.

THE origin of the present publication is sufficiently explained by the accompanying documents, containing certain acts of the ROYAL COMMISSIONERS FOR VISITING THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES OF SCOTLAND, of whose liberal encouragement of Academic study it is the fruit, and of the Author's gratitude to whom he wishes it were a fit memorial. The Author is well aware that the trial, to which it is now submitted, will differ widely from any which it has hitherto sustained. Though somewhat expanded in its dimensions by being relieved, so to speak, of the compressing force which was necessary to bring it within the compass prescribed by the terms of competition, it is, in all essential respects, the same as when submitted to the Faculty of Arts. The Author now

presents it to the world, rather in obedience to authority, than from any confidence he feels of its fitness to meet the public eye. From circumstances which he could not control, the period has been allowed to pass away, when the temporary interest excited by its history might have secured it some attention, independently altogether of its intrinsic merits. On these it must now mainly rely; and the Author is deeply conscious how much it is likely to lose, in the estimation of those who may have heard of it, by being thus subjected to the scrutiny of deliberate criticism, and tried no longer by a merely comparative standard. But it is right and just, perhaps, that a composition, which may hitherto have been too indulgently judged and too splendidly rewarded, should now be reduced, in public opinion, to its proper value, and be treated with a liberality more exactly proportioned to its real deserts.

DOCUMENTS

CONNECTED WITH

THE ROYAL COMMISSION PRIZE ESSAY.

On the 7th of April, 1827, the following program was issued to the University of Edinburgh:

"UNIVERSITY COMMISSION PRIZE.

"His Majesty's Commissioners for Visiting "the Universities and Colleges of Scotland, "considering that it would be very desirable "that they should afford an opportunity to the "Students of the University of Edinburgh, "for displaying their talents and acquirements by "a Public Prize, have

"Resolved,

"1*st*, That they will give the sum of One Hun-"dred Guineas as a prize for the best Essay *on*

"*the National Character of the Athenians, and the* "*Causes of those Peculiarities by which it was dis-* "*tinguished,* to be read by the author in presence "of the Patrons, the Principal, Professors, and "the whole University, on which occasion some "of the Commissioners will attend.

"2*d*, That the Competition be open to all "the Students who have matriculated and attend- "ed any one of the Classes of the said University, "during the present Session (1826-7), whether "they shall attend next Session of College or "not. And,

"3*d*, That the Principal and Professors of the "Faculty of Arts, in the said College, be the "judges of the comparative merits of the Essays "given in, and award the prize.

"The following rules must be strictly observed "by the competitors:

"1. Each Essay shall be distinguished by a "motto, and accompanied with a sealed letter "having the motto on the outside, and contain- "ing within the name and address of the author, "together with a declaration subscribed by him

"in the following terms: 'I hereby declare,
"upon my honour, that the Essay on the National
"Character of the Athenians, &c. bearing the
"motto ——— is solely and exclusively my own
"composition, and that in composing it, I con-
"sulted the following books, viz.———'

"2. When the *words* of an author are taken, they
"shall be marked as a quotation, and reference
"made to the passage where they occur.

"3. The Essay shall not occupy more time in
"reading than about an hour, and any long quo-
"tation or additional illustrations that may be
"thought necessary shall be given as an appendix.

"4. Every part of the manuscript, except what
"is contained in the sealed letter, shall be written
"in a legible hand by a transcriber, and not by the
"author.

"5. The Essay shall be transmitted to the Prin-
"cipal, at the University Chambers, on or before
"the 15th of September next.

"Competitors for the Prize are informed that,
"when the Principal and Professors have fixed
"on an Essay that seems entitled to the prize,

"they will open the sealed letter accompanying
"it, but before publishing their determination will
"request a personal interview with the author,
"that they may have an opportunity of convers-
"ing with him on the subject.

"COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH,
4th April, 1827."

On the 29th of October the following notice appeared:

"HIS MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS for visiting
"the UNIVERSITIES and COLLEGES of SCOTLAND
"have received the following statement from the
"Faculty of Arts of the College of Edinburgh."

"*College, Edinburgh, Oct.* 26, 1827.

"The Principal and the Professors of the Facul-
"ty of Arts, having attentively examined twenty-
"four Essays 'on the Character of the Athenians
"and the Causes of those Peculiarities by which it
"was distinguished,' submitted to them in compe-
"tition for the Prize proposed by the Royal Com-

"mission, were unanimously of opinion that the "preference was due to that which had for its "motto:

"Ars utinam mores animumque effingere posset,
"Nam miranda magis nulla tabella foret.

"and having opened the sealed letter bearing the "same motto, they found the name of the author "to be

"JOHN BROWN PATTERSON,
Student of Divinity.

(Signed) GEO. H. BAIRD, *Principal.*
ANDREW BROWN, *Dean of Faculty.*
JOHN LESLIE.
GEORGE DUNBAR.
DAVID RITCHIE.
WILLIAM WALLACE.
JOHN WILSON.
JAMES PILLANS."

"The Commissioners have much pleasure in "communicating the result of this Competition."

The said Essay having, in conformity with the original regulations, been read on the 17th of November, in presence of the ROYAL COMMISSIONERS, the PATRONS, the PRINCIPAL, PROFESSORS, and UNIVERSITY, the COMMISSIONERS came to the following resolutions in regard to it:

"COLLEGE OF EDINBURGH,
17*th November*, 1827.

"THE ROYAL COMMISSIONERS having re-assembled after having heard Mr. PATTERSON'S Essay read, feel themselves called upon to express their high admiration of it, and impressed with the talent, erudition, and eloquence by which it is so eminently distinguished, they

"RESOLVE,

"That it be printed.

"That the above Resolution be communicated to Mr. PATTERSON by the Chairman, and a copy of this minute be transmitted to the SENATUS ACADEMICUS."

ON THE

NATIONAL CHARACTER

OF

THE ATHENIANS.

With the audacity of genius the great painter Parrhasius once undertook to represent in a visible form the national character of Athens. It is hinted, however, by the author who mentions the attempt, that it could scarcely be called successful.* Nor was the failure wonderful: to paint chaos is no easy achievement. The pen in such a case has this advantage over the pencil, that the former can give in succession those varied forms and aspects of things which the latter must crowd into a single delineation. But this increase of range must be paid for at the almost unavoidable

* See Note A.

expense of unity; and the individual who, in whatever way, is called to execute such a portrait, cannot help feeling the task to be as arduous as it is interesting. The manifestations of Athenian character are so infinitely various, and many of them so intensely brilliant, that the mind's eye loses for a season, amid the dazzling confusion, its power of distinguishing, and takes in nothing but the vague indefinite image of something very changeful, marvellous, and splendid; and authors, accordingly, in lack of more distinctive appellations, have usually had recourse to mere epithets of wonder in alluding to "that extraordinary people,"—"that marvellous republic,"—"that miraculous city,"—"that most wonderful of all historical phenomena."

It is, therefore, with the hope of an approximation merely to an adequate delineation of the Athenian character, but not without a sense of the deeply interesting nature of the subject, that we now proceed with our appointed task.

The title of the Essay calls our attention to two distinct topics: the Character, and its Causes. Of these the latter is first in the order of nature, and it may contribute to distinctness if we make it first also in the order of treatment; premising,

however, that, as the formation of all character is in a great measure carried on by the reaction of its own effects, and as the Athenian character, in particular, was moulded more by the consequences of its own early developement than by any separate and extrinsic bias, it will be impossible to distribute the causes and the effects, the action and the reaction, with minute accuracy under separate heads. We shall endeavour, therefore, in a general way,

I. To give a connected view of that system of influences, reaching from the origin of the nation to the complete developement of its peculiarities under Pericles, out of which the Athenian character arose; and,

II. To trace, with what minuteness our limits will allow, the prominent lines of the character itself as it existed from that brilliant era to the dissolution of Athenian independence; noting as we go along the points at which they connect themselves with the circle of causes before described.

I. We proceed, therefore, in the first place, to trace that system of influences in which the peculiarities of the Athenian character originated, and which we may with sufficient propriety denominate

its early education. This discussion we shall divide into two parts, corresponding to what, in the case of an individual, we should term his general and his professional education; the first, explaining the nature of that civilization by which the humanity of the Athenians was trained; and the second, describing that political progress by which their nationality was nourished.*

The Athenians, then, according to the least presumptuous and most probable of their own traditions, had for the author of their race, Ion, a near descendant of the prince under whom the mythology represents the universal deluge as having happened, and who was preserved amid the wide-wasting catastrophe to be the second founder of the species. Under this Ion most of the learned have recognised Javan, or, as the name reads in unpointed Hebrew, *Iun* (יון), from whom, in Scripture, the states of Greece are called "the realms of Iun,"†

* See the distinction between what we call the humanity and the nationality, or what Sismondi terms the individual and the social force of a people, well explained in that author's Histoire des Republiques Italiennes, vol. i. pp. 417—419.

† Daniel xi. 2.—There is a minute propriety in the original here which is lost in our version. The Hebrew is מַלְכוּת יָוָן in the plural, answering much more exactly than our "realm of

and Alexander the Great is prophesied of under the title "king of Iun."* This circumstance we are led to mention, because it allows us to form at the outset some general idea of the peculiarities of original character distinctive of the race from which the Athenians sprang. Ion its founder was connected with the last of those three great streams of migration by which the world seems to have been peopled; the Shemitic, which colonised the east and south of Asia; the Hamitonian, which proceeded by the south-west of the same continent into Africa; and the Japetian which, advancing by the north of Asia, and depositing the Scythian or Tartar tribes in its progress, finally overspread the countries of Europe.† Among these great divisions of mankind, there obviously existed a marked distinction of character. The first seems to have possessed a prone, simple, submissive spirit, susceptible, without much difficulty, of civilization up to a certain pitch, but easily duped by artifice, and prostrated by authority, as is seen in those stupendous sys-

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Grecia" to the actual state of Greece, divided as it was into so many separate sovereignties.

* Daniel viii. 21. See Note B. † Genesis x.

tems of despotic and sacerdotal power, immemorial prisons of the human intellect, which have erected themselves in the east.* The second race of men appears to have been characterised by a similar temper of tameness and submission, but to have been on the whole inferior in the susceptibility of culture and refinement. The Japetian stock, on the contrary, of which the Ionians were a branch, seems from its whole history to have been originally distinguished over both its brother tribes by the possession of more enterprise of character, an intenser love of liberty, a greater versatility of talent, and a wider range of desire; in short, a freer evolution of humanity, and a proportionally more extensive capacity of civilization.

Belonging to this parent stock, then, and participating to the fullest extent in all its favourable peculiarities, the Pelasgic or Hellenic tribes arrived in Greece. That in their new settlements they first existed in the state of savages, is proved by the concurrent testimony of all antiquity, and especially by that master-piece of historical writing,

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* Τα ἐθνη μεν περι την Ασιαν, διανοητικα μεν και τεχνικα την ψυχην· ἀθυμα δε διοτι ἀρχομενα και δουλευοντα διατελει. Aristot. Polit. vii. 7.

the preliminary view of the early state of Greece with which Thucydides begins his "everlasting possession."* Savages as they were, however, to them Europe was indebted for having, in their migration, brought along with them from the slopes of Caucasus and the shores of the Caspian, the vine and the olive, plants, the importance of which in the advancement of the social culture, was by the ancients esteemed so great, that the planter of the vine and the inventress of the olive, Bacchus and Minerva, along with Ceres the patroness of husbandry, were worshipped among them as the great civilizers of mankind. It was on the plains beneath Hymettus and the yet nameless Acropolis, that these symbols of refinement found their most congenial soil; it was there too that those families of colonists found their appropriate seat, which were distinguished by the highest degree of the free talent and susceptibility so characteristic of the race. That this is no unauthorised description of the Ionians or early Athenians,† is plain, not only from the direct attestation of an-

* Κτημα ες αει, Thucyd. i. 22. Cf. Pausan. viii. 1. Plin. vii. 57. Strabo. vii. p. 321. Edit. Casaubon.

† See Note C.

cient authors, well informed in the antiquities of Greece,* but, from the fact, that under all varieties of situation, in Asia and Miletus, as well as in Attica and Athens, the Ionian branch of the Hellenic stock, was ever distinguished above the Doric and Æolian by general flexibility and elegance.†

There are certain philosophers and experimentalists in education, who are unwilling to hear of such original and native distinctions of character as those we have described, either in individuals or in nations. But, after all that Helvetius and his followers have said of the omnipotence of circumstances in the formation of character, it seems to us that the philosophical conclusion on this subject is truly stated by the greatest master of the inductive method in metaphysics, who has adorned the annals of our University, in the words which follow:

"That the different situations into which men are thrown by the accidents of life would produce great diversities, even on the supposition

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* Τρια γαρ και γενεσθαι Ἑλληνων γενη, Δωριεις, Αιολεις, Ιωνες ου μικρας ουσης διαφορας εν τοις τουτων ηθεσιν, κ. τ. λ. Athen. xiv. p. 624. Ed. Casaubon.

† See Note D.

that their original capacities were the same, is undoubtedly true; but it is surely pushing the conclusion too far to affirm that no original inequalities exist; when no proof from the fact can be produced of such an assertion, and when so strong an analogy as that of the natural disparities among men in point of bodily advantages, leads to an opposite opinion. A farther argument for this may, I think, be deduced from the art of physiognomy, which, notwithstanding the exaggerated and absurd pretensions of some of its professors, seems to have a real foundation in the principles of human nature."*

And surely, if argument from the actual results, and the analogy of bodily constitution, are to count for any thing in the judgments which we form of the original endowments of mental character, the fact that a growth of mind unrivalled in the history of the world, should have sprung from a population of thirty thousand individuals,† occupying a territory of only forty-five square

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* Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. iii. pp. 248–249.

† See Note E.

miles,* and the perfection of human beauty beaming with the expression of internal harmony, which the Athenian form exhibits as it stands yet full of mimic life upon the friezes of the Parthenon, entitle us to affirm of the original and natural character of the Athenians, that it was constitutionally distinguished by a more perfect organization of human nature than any other nation could ever boast of, a greater equilibrium of faculties, a greater range of susceptibilities, summed up in a more perfect general freedom of thought and agency, and qualifying its possessors for a more rapid and unlimited refinement.†

So much for the nature and origin of that general peculiarity of character by which the Ionians were, even at their first settlement in Attica, prepared for entering on the path of improvement.

It now depended on the nature of those first influences to which it was exposed, whether this tender germ of character was to be blasted or cherished, shrivelled into dust or expanded into blossom and fruit. The happier fate befel it. It was

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* Mannert's Geographie des Griechenlands, i. 17.

† Πρὸς τὰς τύχας εὐφυέστατοι, Isocr. Paneg. Oper. p. 46. Ed. Stephan.

neither stunted by the necessary struggle of the human animal against the disadvantages of a hungry and ungenial climate, nor corrupted by the intermixture of races, nor stifled by being sown an age too late, amid the tangled and overspreading growth of antiquated institutions and settled opinions. All circumstances of this description, on the contrary, combined to quicken and invigorate its youthful growth, by an influence not the less powerful, that its operation cannot be rendered very distinctly visible:

Crescit occulto, velut arbor, ævo.*

Hume, in his Essay on national characters, has defended with much ingenuity the position, that the peculiarities of climate have no effect in moulding the character of a people. No one, however, who reflects for a moment on the intimacy of the connection which subsists between the body and the soul, and the constant alternation of action and reaction which is going on between them, can reasonably refuse to admit, that however this influence may be checked and rendered imperceptible by more powerful moral

* Horat. Od. i. 12. 45.

causes, it must from its own nature be an operative energy. It is unfortunate for Mr. Hume's theory, that the proof of it which he draws from the opposite characters of the Bœotian and the Athenian, living, as he says, in the same climate, should be so flatly contradicted by the facts of the case. For all modern travellers agree with the ancient satirist who speaks of "being born in the thick air of the Bœotians,"* that the atmosphere which overhangs their fens and lakes† is exactly the opposite of that clear, pure, bracing air that sheds over Attica unchanging serenity, and has preserved to our days, in almost undiminished relief, marbles sculptured in the age of Pericles. It, therefore, appears to us inconsistent neither with philosophy nor with fact, to say, that the fine original constitution of the Athenians, placed beneath a pure and equable sky; amidst a fresh exhilarating air, nightly resounding the thick-warbled melody of the "Attic

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* Bœotûm in crasso jurares aëre natum, Hor. Ep. ii. 1. 244.

† See especially the Hon. Sylvester Douglas's Essay on the Resemblance between the Ancient and the Modern Greeks, c. v. and Holland's Travels, c. xx.

bird;"* on a soil, which, by its light but not exuberant fertility, neither exhausted the physical powers with want nor oppressed them with satiety, and which supplied, from its interior treasures, the most graceful materials of wealth and of art; amid the scenery of varied hill and dale, rock and ravine, not loaded with the majesty of forests, yet feathered with an unrivalled luxuriance of flowers and elegant shrubs, and in continual view of the bright Egean's "multitudinous laughter;"† had received from nature all the appliances which she could furnish to refine, expand and stimulate its powers, and to diffuse through all its susceptibilities one pervading spirit of animal vivacity.‡

This fine constitution of theirs, thus happily situated, the Athenians were proud to maintain remarkably pure. Without giving undue impor-

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* ——— Where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long.
Milton Par. Reg. iv.

Multisonâ fervet sacer *atthide* lucus.
Martial. i. 54.

† Πεντιων κυμασων ανηριθμον γελασμα.
Æschyl. Prom. Vinct. 89.

‡ See Note F.

tance to the wild tradition which their national vanity afterwards led them to adopt, that they were αυτοχθονες,* sprung of the earth which they inhabited, and that their blood had never been contaminated by the admixture of a more ignoble race, it seems certain, that from the earliest ages, the Attic tribe of Hellenes, amid the migrations and conquests which daily changed the face of Greece, retained in comparative security their independence and their original settlements, without suffering any thing resembling conquest or national mixture.† By this statement it is not meant that there were not individuals, or occasionally, even bodies of foreign settlers admitted into the "earth-born community."‡ The reverse

* Αθηναιοι, αρχαιοτατον μεν ιθνος παρεχομενοι, μουνοι δε εοντες ου μεταναστας Ελληνων, Herod. vii. 161. Λαον εις αυτοχθονα πλειστων Αθηνων, Eurip. Ion. 29. Eodem innati solo, quod incolunt, et quæ illis sedes, eadem origo est, Justin. ii. 7.

† Hence the fact mentioned by Thucydides, that the Athenians were the first nation in Greece to give up the practice of wearing arms, Thucyd. i. 6. See the fact of the early civilization of Athens confirmed as might have been expected in the panegyrical orations; such as, the Menexenus of Plato, Oper. tom. ii. p. 238. Ed. Serran. and the Panegyric of Isocrates, pp. 46–48.

‡ Γηγενης σκηπτουχια, Lycophr. ap. Hesych. in voc. Γηγενης.

is the subject of frequent glorying to the Athenians themselves. It is a eulogy in which the panegyrical orators delight to indulge, that during those early ages, Athens was the sanctuary of Greece where all political refugees, from whatever quarter, sought and found protection in their adversity.*

It was to this circumstance, indeed, that Athens was indebted for the first impulse which shook her out of the sloth of primeval barbarism. That impulse was the importation of eastern knowledge which Cecrops, whom the grateful nation afterwards acknowledged as its king, brought with him from Egypt,† and its activity was kept up by the constant intercourse of Athens with the colonies, which, by a natural consequence of her position, she had carried towards the east into the regions of primitive refinement.‡ In the transi-

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* Vide Isocrat. Paneg. pp. 48, 53. Aristid. Panath. p. 21. Ed. Stephan.

† Apollodorus makes Cecrops to have been a native Athenian, but the uniform tradition of antiquity is against him.

‡ Thucydides (i. 12.) and others (e. g. Herod. i. 142. Strabo, viii. p. 383.) state particularly, that the Athenians sent colonies to the islands and Ionia.

tion, however, of oriental civilization into Greece, it suffered a most remarkable revolution which transformed it from the staple of a rigid monopoly into the germ of the freest of all developements of intellect. With regard to the cause of this revolution no historical information can now be procured, but we may be allowed to conceive that Cecrops, the first civilizer of Athens, had probably retired from Egypt in disgust at that close system of institutions, which there entrusted the keys of knowledge to a single jealous and tyrannical caste; and it was only natural for one who had left his country in the hope of finding liberty of mind as well as of person in the haunts of the Pelasgic savages, to give the knowledge which he brought the freest form of which it was susceptible. However this may be, so it was that the science, which in the east had been the exclusive inheritance of a privileged order, became, in Attica, the universal property of citizens, and so gave an impulse to the national character of the Athenians which it had never exerted on that of its original possessors.

The Athenian character thus qualified by nature to run a brilliant course, and placed by events at a forward starting-point in the career of civili-

zation, enjoyed the further advantage of setting out in an auspicious era of the world. The Cecropidæ were subjected by the past to no weight of authority, no yoke of prejudice, no horror of innovation, to check the excursive range of their powers. To objects of the mental as well as of the bodily appetites may be applied the beautiful words of Lucretius, when, speaking of that youth of the universe, he says,

> Plurima tum tellus etiam majora ferebat;
> Multaque præterea novitas tum florida mundi
> Pabula dia tulit.*

Unconfined to any fenced and beaten path, they were left free in the sunny dawn of refinement to choose, at will, the fairest or sublimest tracks they could discover, and pursued their course over a dewy and untrodden earth, with the proud footstep of "Life's morning-march."

> "The world was all before them where to chuse."†

So far as we have hitherto traced the circumstances connected with the form of human nature

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* Lucret. v. 942. † Milton Par. Lost. xv. 646.

exhibited in the Athenian character, we have confined our attention to those which were purely causes, and in no degree the produce of the character itself in its process of natural evolution. But these are the least important of the influences to be considered as affecting the formation of character. Mind is not a passive principle. Its vital energy, its germ of growth, is within itself. The fatness of the earth may nourish, and the dews of heaven refresh "the tree that yieldeth fruit after its kind, but its seed is in itself upon the earth;"* and according as that internal tendency assumes at first a natural or a constrained direction, is the appearance of the perfect vegetable. So it is with the humanity, whether of an individual or of a nation. The very displays which it makes of itself, during the process of education, become the most important of all causes in regard to its ultimate peculiarities. It is on this account that we reckon the early Greek civilization, though it be, in some measure, itself an exhibition of character, and an effect of previous circumstances, the most important of all causes in the formation of that particular moulding of humanity

* Genesis i. 11. 12.

which the full-grown character of the Athenian people exhibits; and it is for the same reason we now proceed, in pursuance of our great object, to make some remarks on that civilization, both in regard to its component parts, and its peculiar qualities.

The first great step, then, in the progress of improvement, was the invention of the Mythology. To this very peculiar system we have no hesitation in ascribing a substantially original character, or in tracing it directly to the communion of the mind with nature, in those circumstances under which we have described the Athenians as leading their early life.* From their fine constitution susceptible of the most vivid impressions; inhabiting a land which, more than any other, was characterized by variety of interest, " and in which nature appeared constantly in action, because constantly differing from herself;"† thrilling in every limb with the pulses of new emotion; and regarding, with the mingled delight and awe of a child's first spectacle, the great theatre and drama of the world, they must have felt, on first awaking from their trance, as if they had dropped

* See Note G.

† Voyage d'Anacharse, Introd. i.

they knew not whence, into a world of marvels and of mysteries, and must have been overwhelmed with a strange conflict of incoherent sentiments, as they perceived the various aspects, and inexplicable relations, and unexpected transitions of the universe around them. The first impulse of such a state of feeling would be to justify itself, by referring its excitement to a sufficient cause. In that age the discovery of the true system of the world lay far beyond the reach of the inexperienced mind; and the only power that could fill up the blank was imagination. She, laying the foundation of her superstructure on the scanty fragments of knowledge which could then be gleaned from the surface of life, and aided by the influx of mythological materials from Egypt and the East,* proceeded, by the power of her innumerable spells, by unfolding analogies, embodying metaphors, impersonating properties, deifying the dead, painting the invisible, and materializing the spiritual, to rear in the Grecian mythology a complex system of causes corresponding to the

* Herod. ii. 50. 52. Sir William Jones, Asiatic Researches, i. 9.

complexity in the system of effects by which the mind had been confounded. The distinguishing characteristic of the religion thus created by the free operation of the human faculties, was naturally the freedom and the fulness of the display which it contained of human nature.* It sought the causes of all being and all change, in moving principles similar to those which operate in human breasts; and in doing so, it seems to have had no principle of selection, either metaphysical or moral; whatever was palpable in man, it made ideal in divinity. It caught up the fragments of human nature as they offered themselves, and throwing them, at random, into the kaleidoscope of poetry, amused itself with shaking them into all possible combinations, and then fell down to adore the multitude of fantastic, yet attractive forms, which emerged, illuminated by strange lustre, out of the mass of originally rude and unsightly materials. And that the service might answer to the doctrine, the mythologic system was connected with a ritual, which, by its freedom, or to speak more decisively, its libertinism, breathed of the climate and the age, the climate of bright skies, and voluptuous

* Ανθρωποφυιας ενεμισαν τους Θεους, Herod. i. 131.

air, the age of youthful fancy and undisciplined propensities. Every thing beautiful was holy; every thing pleasant to man was acceptable to the gods; and the whole devotion of Greece was just the indulgence of all agreeable sensations. A religion such as this, common though it were to all the Grecian states, was obviously of a character peculiarly congenial to that of the Athenians, and hence they are acknowledged, by all antiquity, to have been its first teachers to mankind. Their soil did not indeed give birth to many of those individuals among the mythical bards, such as the Thracian Orpheus, who were accounted the first prophets and interpreters of the gods; though Musæus, one of the great fathers of the system, whom Virgil describes as leading the choir of "pii vates," in the Elysian paradise, is recorded to have been a native of Athens.* But they were the first who gave this religion a national establishment, and thus invested it with an influence more direct in the formation of national manners; an influence, the reality of

* The author has not been able to discover the ancient authority on which this statement rests, but it is confidently made by Dr Gillies in his History of Greece, c. vi. note 10.

which may be seen in many circumstances connected with their history. The mythic poetry on which the religion was founded, always maintained an unrivalled popularity at Athens. The oracular verses of its seers were there held in peculiar veneration ;* its services celebrated with peculiar splendour,† and its festivals multiplied in unexampled accumulation ;‡ the holiest of all its mysteries were held within the Athenian territories ;§ and the most august of all its temples, the most adorable of all its idols, were monuments of the genius and devotion of the Athenian people.

The first great influence, then, connected with the progress of early Greek civilization, to which Athenian genius was subjected, consisted in the action and re-action between the creative mind and that apotheosis of human nature which it invested with the dignity and power of a national religion. The nature and direction of such an influence are not difficult to perceive. Its immediate tendency was not only to remove, at once, all those checks to the excursiveness of human

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* Aristoph. Eq. 960. et seq. † Plato. Alcib. ii. tom. ii. p. 148.

‡ Xen. de Rep. Athen. Oper. p. 407. Edit. Stephan.

§ The Mysteries of Eleusis.

imagination, and to the freedom of human passions, which it is usually the province of religion to impose, but to transform the whole force of the religious sentiments into one great motive for giving the freest and most unlimited scope to that humanity on earth, which the Greeks enthroned as divinity upon Olympus. It was an influence, in one word, tending, with the force of a religion, to produce and cherish universal genius, and universal emotion; and falling upon a national spirit powerfully predisposed, as we have seen, to the reception of impulse by the bold, gay, youthful character of its original existence, was likely to create an intensity elsewhere unknown, in the exercise of all power and susceptibility.

This religious impulse was soon followed up in the same direction, and in a form which came yet more directly home to men's business and bosoms, by the next great influence which the advancing civilization of Greece evolves, that of the Heroic Poetry.

In the natural progress of things, imagination began to direct itself, from the antiquities of the universe, to the antiquities of man; and, as it had before exalted the powers of nature into gods, now magnified the race of primeval men into de-

migods. It was necessary to have an age of heroes to interpose between the era of mythology and that of ordinary life, something to break the suddenness of the transition from the deified powers and immortal shapes of the first poetry, to the common-place aspects and agencies of human society. The muse, accordingly, who loves to meditate amid the twilight of past time, and to frame beautiful creations out of the clouds of antiquity, was summoned to fill up the interval between gods and men with a race of godlike men, authors of godlike deeds.* Nor were the materials scanty with which she was to work, nor the quarry far to seek. Greece had been the scene of events well calculated to stimulate the poetic mind, a theatre on which all the powers and passions of men had been busily engaged in action and in conflict, action and conflict which, from the untutored simplicity of the age, had been intensely and fearfully dramatic. According to the universal, and therefore the natural process of barbarous colonization, the Pelasgic hordes which peopled

* The affinity between the conception of the gods and the heroes of ancient Greece, is strikingly proved by the epithets which Homer uses in eulogizing his various heroes: διοτρεφὲς, διος, διοδοτης, αντιθεος, θεοις ισος, κ. τ. λ.

Greece, had divided themselves into a vast number of small communities, trifling in extent and physical resources, but each sensitively jealous of its own dignity and independence, and united only in common antipathy to the Asiatic barbarian. It is easy to see how this state of things should give origin to that fervour, both of mutual rivalry against each other, and of united enterprise against the common enemy, of which the war of Thebes and that of Troy are respectively the most memorable examples; and how this rivalry and enterprise, in an age when soldiers were something more than machines, and the moral energy of a warrior was a superior consideration to his material value, would call into action an extraordinary force of human power and passion. Hence it is that the heroic age of Greece has formed the richest mine of tragedy in the history of man; and that the whole scene, in fact, produces on our mind the effect of one great tragedy, representative of the conflict between free will and destiny, and of which the moral is

> ——— To be weak is miserable
> Doing or suffering.*

* Milton. Par. Lost, i. 157.

Now it must be admitted that Athens, though she produced Theseus, the most celebrated character, next to Hercules, of the whole heroic age, was exempted, by the peculiarities of her situation, from participating in the actual heat of this excitement, to the same extent as the Doric and the Æolic tribes; and employed the leisure time, which was thus afforded her, much more happily in cultivating the arts of domestic and civil comfort*. The reflex influence, however, which the conflicts of the heroic age were calculated to produce, as displays of human nature, seems to have been imbibed by the Ionians with greater interest and entireness, than by those who took a more active share in the performance; just as the moral effect of a powerful drama is apprehended more clearly, and felt more strongly by the spectators than by the actors. The proof of this statement is found in the fact, that when out of the memorials of that strange era, the mighty visions of the heroic poetry were formed, it was in the Ionian

* In the cultivation of these arts, the Athenians are acknowledged, by all antiquity, to have been the first of European nations. Justin. ii. 6. For details see Goguet de l'Origine des Loix, &c. vol. ii.

speech she uttered her spells, and on the Athenian people they fell with greatest potency. For in regard to this magnificent literature, the Ionian race was distinguished beyond all other tongues and tribes, by having produced THE POET. The seven cities which contended for the honour of having given birth to Homer were, with one exception, Athens and her colonies;* and it is plain, from the naturalness which pervades his poetry, that the character of his country must have been throughout imbued with the electricity of that genius which lightened forth so brilliantly in him, and that the poet must have sung to a believing people: whence the name they gave him, Ὁμηρος, "the witness.†" Poetry, in that age, uncontrolled by other literature, must have operated, on the minds of men,

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* Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, Athenæ. Ει δε δει και της Ὁμηρου (ποιησεως) μνησθηναι, μετιχει και ταυτης της φιλοτιμιας ἡ πολις, ου μονον δια της ἀποικου πολεως, ἀλλ' ὁτι και ἡ φωνη σαφως ενθενδε, Aristid. Panath. p. 83.

† Such is the derivation of the name, adopted by the younger Schlegel, in his History of Literature. The ordinary one,

"*Blind* Melesigines *thence* Homer called,"

is a burlesque on etymology.

with an intenseness of effect to us not easily conceivable. We find verse, at this period, exercising the same sway over the minds of the Athenians and of the Greeks at large, that was afterwards maintained by eloquence. Orpheus, Amphion, and their minstrel brethren subdued nature by the charms of melody, and erected cities by the magic of the lyre.* The politician legislated in verse, the sage moralized in numbers.† Till the age of Solon, verse was the only language, and poetry the only organ of civilization.‡ Nor was it till twenty Olympiads after The Lawgiver, that poetry was finally superseded as a practical literature, by prose; that the former passed into a luxury, while the latter was employed as a necessary of

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* Hor. Ep. ad Pison. 391.

† Thus the maxims which have descended to us, stamped with the names of the seven Wise Men, are obviously mere fragments of didactic verse.

‡ ——————— σκιψαι γαρ απ' αρχης
Ὡς ωφιλιμοι των ποιητων οἱ γενναιοι γεγενησθαι.
Ορφευς μεν γαρ τελεστας θ' ἡμιν κατιδειξε, φονων τ' απεχεσθαι·
Μουσαιος δ' ιξακεσεις τε νοσων και χρησμους· Ἡσιοδος δε
Γης εργασιας, καρπων ὡρας, αροτους· ὁ δε θειος Ὁμηρος
Απο του τιμην και κλεος εσχε, πλην οτου, ὁτι χρησθ' ιδιδαξεν
Ταξεις, αρετας, ὁπλισεις ανδρων. Aristoph. Ran. 1030. et seq.

life. If, therefore, the Scottish Patriot* had reason for ranking the influence of national ballads upon the character of a people, above that of legal enactments, what limits shall we set to the maxim when the ballads of which we speak are the rhapsodies of Homer, and their influence, for centuries, counteracted by no uncongenial literature? Now the great characteristic of the Homeric poems was nothing but the free unbiassed display which they contained of human nature. The genius of the poet has, by all ages, been felt as something more universal than individual, and his sympathies as human rather than Greek, so that his mighty song has come to be regarded as the very epic of mankind, the universal mirror of ennobled humanity. And thus it happened that the spirit of the heroic age, embodied in the national poetry of Athens, was directly calculated to carry forward the impulse given by the national religion to the free, perfect, harmonious evolution of all the parts of human nature; that is, to universal genius and passion, as the grand characteristics of the humanity contained in the Athenian cha-

* Fletcher of Saltoun.

racter. In this sense may the words of Hegesias be used, without a metaphor, "Attica is the creation of gods and ancestral heroes."*

Having thus spoken generally in regard to the spirit of that early civilization which we have termed the education of the national character, we are prepared to understand and estimate aright, that system of education, for the individuals of the nation, which we find established from an early period among the Athenians, and by means of which the influences of the general culture, to which they were subjected, were brought directly home to every citizen. Music for the mind and gymnastics for the body, is the summary which Plato gives of the popular institute of education at Athens, transmitted from immemorial antiquity.† Now of this music, in

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* Apud Strabon. ix. p. 396.

† Τις ουν ἡ παιδεια; ἡ χαλεπωτατη εὑρειν βελτιω της ὑπο του παλλου χρονου ἐυρημενης. ἐστι δε που, ἡ μεν ἐπι σωμασι, γυμναστικη. ἡ δ' ἐπι ψυχῃ, μουσικη. Plat. de Rep. ii. tom. ii. 376. This system the philosopher has largely expounded, in the Second and Third Books of the Republic, and the Seventh Book on the Laws. The English reader will find a spirited sketch of Athenian Education in the Introduction to Mitchell's Aristophanes.

the wide sense in which the term was used by the ancients, poetry, and especially the poetry of Homer, formed the most important part. Homer was, in truth, the universal text-book of mental education, the encyclopædia of all mental knowledge, from which generation after generation was instructed in language, eloquence, religion, tradition, geography, politics.* We do not wonder that, among a people so full of mind as the Athenians, trained by a civilization in its character and its form so thoroughly poetical, and especially under the impression of a lyre so resistless as that of Homer, music in its antique signification should have had so prominent a place allotted to it in the course of youthful discipline. Nor knowing, as we do, the importance which music, even in its more vulgar and limited sense, may assume in the estimation of those whom nature has qualified with an unusual instinct of

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* Plat. de Rep. x. tom. ii. p. 606. Thus Niceratus, in Xenophon's Banquet, (Oper. p. 514.) professing himself a universal teacher, quotes Homer as his example and text-book. And Pliny, discoursing on agriculture, (H. N. xvii. 5.) takes occasion to refer to Homer under the sublime title "Fons ingeniorum Homerus."

melody, can we be surprised at the station which it occupied in the regard and the educational system of a people which, as a people, was more intensely musical than any other on record, the nation for whose "polished and religious ears,"* the "melodious thunder" of Demosthenes was elaborated, and the miraculous language of Greece was cultivated to its last exquisite Attic perfection. Nor are the causes which recommended the bodily or gymnastical part of education to the favour of the Athenians less obvious. Their fine organization was pervaded with motive power; a clear health enlivened all its functions; the influence of the pure air of Attica was elasticity in every limb; the importance of the fleet foot and the strong arm, in ancient warfare, connected the ideas of martial glory with the palæstra; their traditions of ancient times were crowded with the praises of physical strength in their demigods and heroes; and athletic accomplishments were the merits on which Greece, in her Olympic assembly, lavished her most spirit-stirring tokens of honour, in praise of which her lyre awoke its loftiest tones of eulogy.† Now, in order to judge

* Aures teretes atque religiosæ, Cic. Orat. IX.

† See the Odes of Pindar, *passim*.

rightly of a system of education which may, at first view, appear to us extremely contracted and superficial, we must recollect that the Athenians contemplated the object of education under a considerably different light from that in which we regard it, but one exactly accordant with what we have endeavoured to shew was the whole spirit of their national culture. It was not directly either knowledge or morality which they sought to inculcate into the youthful mind. The one great purpose for which their discipline was framed was the evolution of human nature; the exercise of its faculties; the culture of its susceptibilities, both of body and mind; in short, it was just the epitome of the early culture of Greece. It was intended to give a man possession of himself, and in himself of a free man, with all his powers about him, and all at his command; ready to act vigorously and endure resolutely whatever might betide; to infuse into his mind the unlimited consciousness of a free thinker, and a free agent. In this point of view, the system of Athenian education was admirably fitted to serve its end by its simple unity. It is a remark worthy of Montesquieu's sagacity,* that while, among us,

* Esprit des Loix, iv. 4.

every individual passes through three distinct and often contradictory educations, the education of school, the education of home, and the education of the world, the Athenians were trained from first to last upon one uniform principle. It may hence be conjectured with what entireness the effect of the national discipline passed into the national mind of Athens, and with what justice we rank it, considered even as a separate influence, one of the most efficacious in that general system of causes by which the Athenian character was moulded.

But the efficacy of this system of education, in creating a truly national character, depends less on any detailed peculiarities of its own, than on its general conformity with the great tendency of early Greek civilization. This identity of principle between the education of the individual and that of the nation, seems to us one of the most striking circumstances by which the Grecian is distinguished from all other processes of social culture.* Among the other systems of original

* See the distinct characters of the different civilizations which the world has undergone, admirably delineated in Douglas's

civilization, we find, in Egypt and India, the means of mental cultivation so distributed according to the differences of caste, under the tyranny of a jealous priesthood, that the developement of popular bears absolutely no proportion to that of individual character. The different orders of men are, at least, as widely distinguished from each other as different nations in ordinary cases, while the general features that are common to all the ranks are comparatively so few, as scarcely to constitute any thing deserving the name of a character. The same effect has been produced among modern nations by a different cause, that division of labour on which their social system is founded. Civilization, in modern times, has grown to such a magnitude, and ramified itself into such detail, that no intellect is large enough to comprehend the whole, and no life is long enough to trace out the minutiæ of any considerable portion. The overgrown system, therefore, has been portioned out among different individuals and classes of men, of whom each has a separate

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Advancement of Society, Part First; a work resembling in more than title the Advancement of Learning.

department to observe and to cultivate.* The effect of this arrangement has been, in a great measure, to destroy that uniformity of views and sympathy of feelings, which gives a definite and palpable consistence to national character; so that, in our day, it is almost impossible to attempt the portrait of a people without running into the extreme, either of insipidity or of caricature. But at Athens there were no such marked distinctions of professional pursuit or professional character. Every citizen was educated on the same principle as another, and all on the same principle as the nation in general. The multitude of slaves, who existed in every Grecian state, made it possible for the citizens to live without regular professions, and thus freely to cultivate and employ all their personal energies.† The action of the national spirit was kept up, not, as among us, by the indirect and complex relative agency of many distinct interests and various characters, but by the direct contributions of multifarious talent from every separate

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* See Ferguson on Civil Society, Part V. Sect. 3, 4.

† See Note H.

citizen. The nation was then a great *individual*, a collective *man*, and so possessed, beyond any modern people, of a definite individual character, a perfect human idiosyncrasy.*

There is another circumstance in the general process of Athenian civilization, that deserves to be remarked, as having indefinitely augmented its efficacy upon the national character. That circumstance is its having been of indegenous and original growth; and it constitutes another peculiarity by which it is strikingly distinguished from the mental culture with which we are familiar in modern times. Our civilization is in a very small degree indeed of native produce. It is composed of elements contributed from all other ages and all other countries. We invent little, and learn much. The arts are cultivated, the progress

* This distinction between ancient and modern civilization is beautifully expounded by a philosopher not unworthy of the chair he occupied in our University, Dr Adam Ferguson. Essay on the History of Civil Society, Part I. Sect. 5. "Like mathematicians who study the elements of Euclid, but never think of mensuration; we read of societies, but do not propose to act with men; we repeat the language of politics, but feel, not the spirit of nations."

of the species is advanced by "here a little and there a little;" people borrowing from people, each after each "augments its small peculiar,"* till an equilibrium is established among them all; and, as far as character is connected with civilization, there is formed a general character for the civilized world, but scarcely a national character for any single people. General eminence excludes pre-eminence. At Athens all was different. It must be confessed, indeed, that what we have described in regard to the modern commonwealth of nations, applies, in some degree, to the body of the republics which composed the Greek confederation. They generally shared in that mental culture which formed the national education of Athens; and, at an early period, several of them seem to have far outstript her in turning the circumstances of their situation to account for the purposes of their own aggrandisement. Hence, to the latest times, there continued to exist a certain community of character among the Grecian tribes, originating, without doubt, in the identity of their early education. But in the progress of things a

* Milton Par. Lost, vii. 367.

distinction occurred in favour of Athens, which made her, as it were, the heiress of the whole Greek civilization. The division, which was completed about the time of the Persian war, into the Doric and Ionian, or oligarchical and democratical factions,* virtually resolved Greece into Sparta and Athens, which were respectively the heads of the two opposing interests. But Sparta had voluntarily chosen to resign her share in that free, harmonious, and full evolution of human faculty and susceptibility, to which the series of civilizing influences in early Greece so powerfully tended; and had subjected herself, on the contrary, to a hard, rigid, monotonous system, expressly

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* Των Ἑλληνων οἱ μεν ἐφ' ἡμιν, οἱ δε ὑπο Λακεδαιμονιοις εισιν· αἱ γαρ πολιτειαι, ἐ ὡν οικουσι τας πολεις, οὑτω τους πλειστους αυτων διειληφασιν. Isocrat. Paneg. p. 44.—It is worth while to remark the art of the orator in the selection of the prepositions by which he describes the relation of their factions to their heads, οἱ μεν ἐφ' ἡμιν, οἱ δε ὑπο Λακεδαιμονιοις· "the one dependent upon us, the other subject to the Lacedæmonians." Cf. Isocr. Panath. pp. 243-244.—Οἱ μεν γαρ Αθηναιοι πανταχου τας ολιγαρχιας, οἱ δε Λακωνες τους δημους κατελυον. Aristot. Polit. v. 7.—The systematic application of this principle to explain the revolutions of Grecian affairs, is the great merit of Mitford's work as a philosophical history.

formed for repressing the efforts of human nature in all directions but one, that of martial accomplishment. Thus, in her struggles to wrest from Athens the palm of military ascendancy, she allowed her rival to appropriate, without question, the laurels and the wreaths of universal genius. This ambition was encouraged at Athens, by the enlightened policy of the three great men, to whom, more than to all besides, she was indebted for her national character; Solon, who, by his laws, patronized literature, and made the education of the people an object of legislative provision;* Pisistratus, who had not only the merit of collecting, into their present noble completeness, the scattered rhapsodies of Homer, but was the first politician on record to provide for the popular illumination by the institution of a public library†; and Pericles, the

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* The law which Solon enacted, binding children to the support of their parents if they fell into destitute circumstances, was enforced only on those who had received from them, in their childhood, a liberal education. Alexis ap. Vitruv. vi.

† Libros Athenis disciplinarum liberalium publice ad legendum præbendos primus posuisse dicitur Pisistratus tyrannus.

Aul. Gell. vi. 17.

second Pisistratus,* the great object of whose peace administration was the encouragement of all liberal arts and elegant accomplishments. Thus what might have been the common inheritance of Greece, became the private property of Athens. The Panhellenic was transformed into the Panathenaic Minerva. The liberal gifts of nature to Hellas became distinctive features of character to Athens, and made her a centre of attraction for all genius and civility. The light which nature had originally made lambent over the land, like that which illuminated the earth on the three first days of its being, was now concentrated into a single orb,† and Athens took her luminous seat alone, a sun sphered unapproachable in "the brightest heaven of invention." ‡

With this remark we must conclude our expositions in regard to the nature of that education, by which, in the youth of the Athenian people, its humanity was trained, and the mode in which the

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* The extraordinary resemblance of these two great men was not left unimproved as a subject of political gossip and satire by the populace and comedians of Athens. Plut. in Pericl. Valer. Max. viii. 9.

† Milton Par. Lost, vii. 359.

‡ Shakspeare Henry V. Chorus I.

whole spirit of that education was transfused with such force and entireness into the national genius; an education, of which the general peculiarity was its tendency to encourage, in the character of this peculiar people of nature, an absolute freedom of mind and will, a full and unconstrained evolution of all the talents and all the susceptibilities of the human constitution. The actual results of this training upon the matured character of Athens, we shall hereafter be able to perceive. But, in the meanwhile, having said so much of the civilization by which her humanity or individual energy was cultivated, we must speak, though more briefly than the importance of the subject demands, of the political progress by which her nationality or social energy was cherished and unfolded.

The government of a people is, without question, the most powerful of all single causes in moulding its character. "Political constitution," as Isocrates says, "is the soul of a political body."* It

* Πασα πολιτεια ψυχη πολεως εστι. Isocrat. Panath. p. 261. It is difficult to express, in English, the relation between πολιτεια and πολις, on which the epigrammatic turn of the Greek maxim depends.

will master and controul the influence of all other principles upon the national mind, if its spirit be inconsistent with theirs; and, if coincident, will invest them with a power of tenfold their intrinsic energy. The latter was the case at Athens. For the same scorn of limitations which was the characteristic of the Athenian civilization was the principle of the Athenian polity. It should seem as if, while the Pelasgic savages yet roamed over Parnes and Lycabettus in a state of wild nature, they had the seeds sown within them of that love of liberty, or rather hatred of restraint, by which they were ever afterwards distinguished. Hence it happened that, when they at length submitted themselves to regular government, as it was their own voluntary act, the result neither of force, as happens in the case of national subjugation, nor of those natural and unwilled tendencies which gradually, out of the system of patriarchal authority, built up the oriental despotisms, the constitution of their state though monarchical,* was, from its earliest age, remarkably

* Το πρωτον ἐβασιλευοντο αἱ πολεις, και νυν ἐτι τα ἐθνη. Aristot. Polit. i. 2. Cf. Plat. de Legg. iii. tom. ii. p. 680. Omnes antiquæ gentes regibus quondam paruerunt. Cic. de Legg. iii. 2.

liberal and free. From all the facts which can be ascertained in relation to the Cecropian monarchy,* it is plain that the royal prerogative was exceedingly limited; that the king was rather the leader than the sovereign of his people; and that to them belonged the great mass of practical power. By the arrangements of Theseus, the most celebrated of all the Athenian princes, the government was rendered yet more decidedly democratical,† and it is a remarkable circumstance to this effect, noticed by Plutarch, that Homer, in his catalogue of the different states of Greece which joined in the Trojan expedition,

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* See the whole mass of traditions on this subject, collected with infinite learning and labour, by Meursius in the Thesaurus Antiq. Græc.; a good summary of them will be found in Goguet. If we may infer any thing in regard to Athens from the representations which Homer gives of other heroical monarchies, we might quote as an authority for the statement in the text, the remarkable line in which he terms the royal authority of Phæacia, "the dignity which the people had bestowed:"

Γερας, ὁ, τι Δημος ἰδωκεν. Hom. Odyss. vii. 150.

† Plutarch (in Thes.) attributes to Theseus the honour of having been the first prince who had the magnanimity to resign absolute power to make way for a free government. Hence Isocrates says of him, την μεν πολιν διοικειν μετ' πλειδους ποιησεν.

gives the name of Δημος* to none but the Athenians. In these circumstances it was not extraordinary, (for the love of power is the most encroaching of all principles,) that a people so strongly led by imagination, and experiencing a daily advancement in civilization which made all sense of subjection painful, should, on the first convenient opportunity, rid themselves of monarchy altogether; † or that they should do it after that somewhat fantastic fashion, which they in point of fact adopted, when, on the heroic fall of Codrus, they declared that none but Jupiter was worthy to be their king and his successor. That this was not a mere accidental event, but a result of the gradual progress of opinion, seems plain from the fact that almost simultaneously monarchy sank without a struggle, as if by a natural death, in most of the Grecian states; and that, even after the fall of royalty, the progress continued regular through various

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Panath. p. 259. And Demosthenes in like manner Θησευς συνωκισεν αυτους, και δημοκρατιαν εποιησεν. Neær. Oper. p. 737. Ed. Morelii.

* οἱ δ' ἀρ' Ἀθηνας εἰχον, ευκτιμενον πτολιεθρον, Δημον Ερεχθηος. Homer. Iliad. ii. 546.

† Pausan. iv. 5.

more and more popular forms of oligarchy, till that too was swallowed up at Athens by the torrent of democratic feeling.* The state of anarchy, however, into which when, the ancient checks on popular license, were withdrawn, the Athenians soon found themselves precipitated, compelled them to have recourse to a more definite and chartered constitution; though even in the act by which they sought to check their own unlicensed freedom, their democratical tendencies were strongly manifested in the circumstance, remarked by Aristotle, that they uniformly selected their lawgivers from the middle class of citizens.† Accordingly, after an unsuccessful trial of Draco's sanguinary code, they appointed the wise and virtuous Solon unlimited legislator of the commonwealth.‡ The constitution which, under this commission, he delivered to his countrymen, and which, considering the time and circumstances of its composition, deserves to be esteemed a master-effort of sagacity, was, necessarily, democratical in its basis;

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* Aristot. Polit. iv. 13.

† Του μεσων πολιτων. Aristot. Polit. iv. 11.

‡ Ου τα μεν, τα δ' ουχι, παντα δ' αμαθως ειστρεψαντων, αρχας, εκκλησιας, δικαστηρια, βουλας. Plut. in Solon.

though, at the same time, the legislator made it his object to provide sufficient checks on the popular despotism, in the prerogatives which he conferred on the senate of Four Hundred and the tribunal of the Areopagus.* Hence when asked if he had given the Athenians the best possible laws, the sage replied: "The best which they can bear;"† a reply strongly intimating the strength to which the love of popular power, cherished by a singularly free developement of mental character, had already risen at Athens, and his apprehension that it might be too late to check it even by the restraints of his beautiful aristo-democracy.‡ So in fact it proved. For while the laws, by which he had defined and guarded civil right, continued the objects of popular veneration down to the extinction of the commonwealth, the constitution was, almost immediately after its promulgation, suspended in the strife of parties, which terminated in the brilliant domination of the Pisistratidæ; and, even after having been restored on the expulsion of Hippias, was made the victim

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* Plut. in Solone. † Ibid.

‡ Μίξαντα καλως την πολιτειαν. Aristot. de Rep. ii. 12. Cf. Justin. ii. 7. et Solonis Fragment. ap. Potter. Archæol. i. 3.

of various innovations destructive of the whole system of balances which Solon had wisely, but too insecurely, disposed. Step by step the Solonic constitution was melted down into a pure democracy. Clisthenes added indefinitely to the power of the people, by the institution of the Ostracism; and to their already excessive tendency to political meddling, by encreasing the number of the tribes to such an amount, as to give every individual more or less a political part to play.* This was followed by the law, with which Aristides found it necessary, after the Persian war, to propitiate the ungovernable vanity of the victor people;† the law admitting citizens, of the lowest class, to fill all public stations indiscriminately with the highest. The corruption of the constitution was carried on by Cimon, whose princely liberalities had all the effect of bribery upon the

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* Herod. v. 66. 69. 94. Και τα τοιαυτα κατασκευασματα χρησιμα προς την δημοκρατιαν, εἰς Κλεισθενης ιν Αθηνησιν ἐχρησατο· φυλαι τε και ἑτεραι τοιητσαι πλειους, και φρατριαι· και παντα σοφιστεον, ὁκως αν ὁτι μαλιστα αναμιχθωσι παντες αλληλοισι. Aristot. Polit. vi. 4.

† Ὁ ναυτικος ὀχλος, γινομενος αιτιος της περι Σαλαμινα νικης, και δια ταυτης, της ἡγεμονιας, την δημοκρατιαν ἰσχυροτεραν ἐποιησεν. Aristot. Polit. ii. 12. Plut. in Aristid.

people,* and by Pericles, when he applied the public treasury to a similar use. But the most fatal blow of all was that which the last named statesman struck through his creature Ephialtes, in degrading the sacred prerogative of the Areopagus,† that venerable senate, which, veiling itself in the darkness of night from all illusions of sense, and guarded by the severity of law against all appeals of passion and imagination, used to sit like a public conscience in its sanctuary, the watching genius of the constitution and of civic virtue at Athens.‡ Thus, the process of events, which had gradually concurred to invest the people with political power, terminated at last in the establishment of an unlimited and despotical ochlocracy; the union of all the powers of government in the hands of the so-

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* Plut. in Cimon. Athenæ. xii. p. 513. Mitford xv. 7.

† Aristot. Polit. ii. 12. Ὥσπερ Τυρανν῾ are his words of Pericles, and of Ephialtes τῳ δήμῳ χαριζόμενοι τὴν πολιτείαν εἰς τὴν νῦν δημοκρατίαν κατέστησαν.

‡ See the eulogy of this illustrious body duly pronounced by Isocrates in his Areopagitic oration, (an oration which has had the honour of giving its own name to the most majestic work, in the form of a speech, which our literature boasts, the Areopagitica of Milton,) and by Demosthenes in his speech against Aristocrates, pp. 412. 413.

vereign populace; or, in two words, a democratical tyranny.*

Nor must we forget, in this review, that the external fortunes of the nation had been as brilliant as its internal constitution had become licentious. The renown of victories which, with all the deductions made by the cynical Sallust† and his followers, must still be called unparalleled, both for the heroism which achieved them, and for the place which they hold in the history of man, had enshrined Athens as in the centre of a glory. The genius of Miltiades and Themistocles, had carried her to the pinnacle of renown for arms and diplomacy;‡ the justice of Aristides had made her the acknowledged leader and treasurer of the Greek confederation;§ the ad-

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* Ὁ δῆμος ὁ Ἀθηναίων κυριώτατος ὢν των ἐν τῃ πολει ἁπαντων, και ἐξον αυτῳ ποιειν ὁτι αν βουλοιτο. Demosth. in Neær. p. 739. See Note I.

† Atheniensium res gestæ, sicuti ego æstimo, satis amplæ magnificæque fuere; verum aliquanto minores tamen, quam famâ feruntur. Sallust. Catil. 8.

‡ Τον ἡγουμενον (Θεμιστοκλεα) ὁς μονος και τοπους, και καιρους, και τα των βαρβαρων απορρητα, και τα μελλοντα, ὡσπερ μαντις, ἐξηγειτο. Aristid. Panath. p. 41.

§ Thucyd. i. 96. Plut. in Aristid.

venturous bravery of Cimon had established for her a brilliant and extended empire ; * the sagacity of Pericles had consolidated the frame-work of her dominion, and made her structure worthy the place she held in Greece † ; all had combined to invest her with the command of the seas, and raise to an unexampled pitch of prosperity, both her military and her commercial marine ;‡ she was the centre of an extensive trade, carried on, both directly, and through the medium of a multitude of rich and powerful colonies, situated in the mid-channel of ancient traffick ; she was a manufacturing town so distinguished as to be accounted the inventress of all useful arts ;§ and, in one word, she had become what she called herself, the most beautiful, the most wealthy,‖ the most puissant, and the most glorious of commonwealths; the luminary of Greece, the terror of Persia, the envy of the world.

II. Such were the two educations to which, in its youth, the Athenian character was subjected;

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* Plut. in Cimon. † Plut. in Pericl.

‡ Ποδαπω το γενος ; ἰδου αἱ τριηρεις αἱ κελαι. Aristoph. Aves. 109. See Note K.

§ See Note L.

‖ See Note M.

that of its humanity, and that of its nationality. Under each of these heads we have described a variety of separate influences, those of organization, climate, age, religion, poetry, education, government, empire, to which separately we shall have frequent occasion to advert, in discussing the details of the character resulting from them. We have chosen, however, to arrange them in these two complex groupes, not merely for the purpose of classification, but especially because out of the general effect of these two combinations of causes two great peculiarities were formed, which may be considered as the foundation-principles of the Athenian character. These we shall now explain in a general way, before passing to more particular details.

The first of these peculiarities, which is the general result of that complex influence described under the name of civilization, is a singularly free and universal developement of the component parts of human nature. We have seen how, in its various parts, the education, both of the individual and of the nation, was directly calculated for the purpose of giving free evolution at once to the mind and to the will. It might, indeed, be imagined, from the completely poetical character of the early Greek

civilization, that the character of the people too might be somewhat exclusively poetical, and that there might be some deficiency in their nature of the more prosaic and practical qualities of mind, impairing the general completeness and harmony of their faculties. But the truth is, that poetry, to an early people, is not what it is to an individual in a highly cultivated age; the selection of a single path of mental exertion, requiring certain faculties to be cherished to the prejudice of others: To such a people it is the natural language of all the faculties. Hence says Lord Bacon, "for the expressing of affections, passions, corruptions, and customs, we are beholden to poets more than to philosophers' works, and for wit and eloquence, not much less than to orators' harangues."* We have already had an opportunity of remarking how fully this statement was verified in the mythological and heroic poetry of early Greece; its distinctive peculiarity being the singularly perfect reflection which it presents of human nature. That the poetic character of the early Grecian culture was owing to the simplicity of the

* Advancement of Learning, book ii. Works, vol. i. p. 52. 4to. edit.

age, and not to any partial bias in the constitution, is proved by the fact, that when, with the progress of time, the circumstances were altered, to which poetry owes its predominance with every gifted people in the earlier stages of its history, the poetic form of Grecian civilization was altered too; prose and poetry took each its appropriate place in a complete and harmonious literature; and the ages of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were respectively those of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon. It was thus that Athens became that "rara avis in terris,*" a universal genius. Within the space of a single century, she had cultivated almost the whole circle of the arts, in single departments of which it has taken long ages to raise individual nations to eminence like hers,† while in many departments she remains still the unrivalled object of a hopeless admiration; she had reaped distinction in every field of national glory, and

* Juven. Sat. vi. 165.

† Her universal eminence comprehended all departments of national distinction, those which, were we to believe the moralists implicitly, are most inconsistent with each other. Ἡ Ἀθηναιων πολις, ὡς ἰσχυρα, μεγιστα τε ην, και μεγαλοψυχοτατους ἰσχυριν ανδρας· αλουργη μεν γαρ ημπισχοντο ἱματια, ποικιλους δ' ὑπεδυνον

in many, left but the gleanings for those that followed.* In luxurious refinement the rival of Corinth, in military prowess at least the peer of Sparta, in commercial prosperity a competitor with Phœnicia, in poetry the heiress of Homer, of eloquence and arts the mother, like Niobe in her happier days, rejoicing in a matchless offspring, the city in whose congenial atmosphere the famous wits of all the world, Aristippus from the verge of Libya's burning deserts, and Anacharsis from the central wilds of Scythia met each other—Athens has become a sort of proverb to the nations, expressive of all genius and all beauty.* Imperial Rome, after having, with laborious imitation, constructed for herself a literature on the model of hers, was proud to term it "our Athens."† A modern city, if distinguished by

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χιτωνας· κορυμβοις δ' αναδιομενοι των τριχων, χρυσους τεττιγας περι το μετωπον και τας κομας εφορουν· εκλαδιας δε αυτοις διφρους εφερον οι παιδες, ινα μη καθιζοιεν ως ετυχεν· και ουτοι ησαν οι τοιουτοι, οι την εν Μαραθωνι νικησαντες μαχην, και μονοι την της Ασιας απασης δυναμιν χειρωσαμενοι. Athen. xii. p. 512.

* Ἡ πολις ἡμων το των Ἑλληνων ονομα πεποιηκε, μηκετι του γενους, αλλα της διανοιας δοκειν τεκμηριον ειναι. Isocr. Paneg. 51.

† Nunc totus Graias nostrasque habet orbis Athenas.
Juv. xv. 110.

beauty of situation, by elegance of structure, or by literary refinement, straightway assumes the title of the Modern Athens.* Italian artists and French literati love to allude to themselves as new Athenians, and to decorate their Leo, or their Louis, with the name of Pericles. To enumerate the titles of eulogy which the universal genius of Athens has procured her from the wondering nations would be to fill a volume. "The inventress of all sciences and erudition;" "the temple of letters, eloquence, and social cultivation;" "the original of civilization, learning, religion, agriculture, policy, and laws;" "the second creator of life;" "the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence;" let these be a small specimen of the styles and titles of the "ancient of days, august Athena," the Gloriana of the Muses' realm.†

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* "Ah! need I tell that" city's "name?" The affectation, however, is not unexampled. In Gruter's Ancient Inscriptions, p. 177, there is described a monument of the city of Milan, in which that town assumes the very title in question "Aquæ ductum in Novis Athenis cœptum, &c.

† Illæ omnium doctrinarum inventrices Athenæ. (Cic. de Orat. i. 4.) "Literæ ac facundia et civilis ordo disciplinæ veluti templum, Athenas habent." Justin. ii. 7. Adsunt Athenienses,

Her passions moreover were not less universal in their range than her genius, nor did they form a picture less complete of this department of abstract human nature. Its good and its evil were in her displayed in strange union; and it constituted the difficulty of the painter's task who wished to take her likeness, that what seemed contradictory elements of feeling were simultaneously displayed in the same countenance. "For he wished," says Pliny, "to represent Demus in all his variety of characters, capricious, passionate, unjust, inconstant, inexorable, forgiving, compassionate, magnanimous, boastful, abject, brave, cowardly, and all in one expression." "The democracy of Athens" according to Plutarch's description "was easily excited to anger, quickly soothed again to pity; it was more than any other nation delighted with flattery, less than any other offended with

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unde humanitas, doctrina, religio, fruges, jura, leges ortæ atque in omnes terras distributæ putantur. Cic. pro Flacc.

Primæ frugiparos fetus mortalibus ægris
Dididerunt quondam præclaro nomine Athenæ,
Et recreaverunt vitam, legesque rogarunt.
Lucret. vi. i.

See Milton Par. Reg. iv. Byron Childe Harold, Cant. ii. "Et quem non?" as Wakefield says.

sarcasm; it was ferocious, and that towards its own ministers; philanthropic, and that even to its enemies."* "By bringing together," says a learned modern, "the features which Aristophanes supplies of the customs, manners, vices, and whole character of the people of Athens, the reader will fix in his mind the indelible idea of a people in whom infinite contrarieties were united; and who, in a manner that can scarce be expressed, connected nobility with the cast of Athens; wisdom with madness; rage for novelty, with a bigotry for antiquity; the politeness of a monarchy, with the roughness of a republic; refinement with coarseness; independence with slavery; haughtiness with servile compliance; severity of manners with debauchery; a kind of irreligion with piety."† It was thus that the Athenians became, as it were, a national type of man, with all his various powers and contradictory passions, and the object of a similarly mixed and compounded emotion. This nature of ours possesses too much that is sublime to be utterly despised,

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* Plut. de præcept. gerend. Reipubl. iii.

† Brumoy's Greek Theatre, translated by Dr. Johnson, Conclusion, ii.

too much that is mean to be wholly respected, it is too amiable to be entirely hated, and too imperfect to be without exception loved; yet by the very inconsistency of its constituent elements, not less than by the frequent splendour of their results, does it render itself the object of ceaseless wonder; and so it is that towards the national character which was its epitome, or as Aristides terms it, its image and its limit,* we are impressed with that strange feeling, before described, of changing esteem and unchanging astonishment.

We are now, however, to contemplate all this variety of power and passion subjected to one great paramount impulse; which it was the tendency of the second education before described to create and cherish, but the predominance of which, far from checking, excited and stimulated the whole humanity of the Athenian character. This impulse was an intense and bigotted patriotism. We have already seen by what process of events Athens was rendered the most splendid and powerful of the Grecian states; and how her people became a sovereign and an imperial nation, with

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* Ει τινα χρη πολιν της φυσιως ανθρωπειας εικονα και ὁρον προσειπειν, ἡ δ' αν μοι δοκῃ δικαιως κληθηναι. Aristid. Panath. p. 97.

nothing in the past to look to but their own prosperity and glory, and no prospect for the future but wider prosperity, and glory more brilliant. In these circumstances it is not wonderful that the national character should have deeply imbibed the conviction, that Athens was the first of states, and that Athenians, as such, were entitled to precedence among all their citizens. In the better days of the commonwealth, this conviction, and the burning desire produced by it

Αιεν αριστευειν, και υπειροχον εμμεναι αλλων*

assumed a certain cast of romantic nobleness and sublimity. Although their ambition and jealousy of predominance led, undoubtedly, to many acts of oppression towards their allies, and gave to their superiority in Greece that character of tyranny which ultimately produced the Peloponnesian war,† yet the air of lofty magnanimity, which at this period it possessed, strongly inclines us to pardon it as "the infirmity of noble minds."‡ Theirs was an ambition which sought its highest

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* Homer. Iliad. VI. 208.

† Οι συμμαχοι δουλοι του δημου των Αθηναιων καθιστασι μαλλον. Xenoph. de Rep. Ath. p. 404.

‡ Milton's Lycidas.

rewards not so much in the actual acquisitions which they made, as in the rapture of the strife and the consciousness of the triumph, a triumph dear to the Athenians, chiefly as justifying to their own minds the inborn sense of their superiority, and vindicating their own proud vanity. "Præter laudem nullius avari,"* they were goaded on to eminence by essentially the same feelings, both as individuals, and as a nation. Their contests as individuals, that, for example, of Themistocles and Aristides, were contests of emulous patriotism, as thoroughly purified as it is possible to conceive, from envy, avarice, and malignity, and uniformly subordinated to the glory of their common country.† Their object was mere superiority in her regards, to be esteemed the foremost in their own department by that city, which they adored; to be considered as having contributed the most to her interest and fame,

"First in the race that led to glory's goal."‡

* Horat. Ep. ad Pison. 324.

† On one occasion when Aristides and Themistocles had been sent together on an embassy they covenanted to lay down their enmity upon the frontier, and take it up again when they returned. Plut. Apophth. Aristid. 3.

‡ Byron's Childe Harold, Canto ii. 2.

As a people, the object of their ambition was similar, the "principatus Græciæ,"* the place of honour, simply to be acknowledged the first in that strife of nations of which Greece was the glorious theatre; not that they might slumber in peace beneath their laurels, but that they might hold the place of foremost danger, as well as foremost fame, in the ranks of the confederation against the barbaric tyranny. It was essentially no gross desire of physical power or gain; but a refined, ethereal, exciting principle of an elevated national mind, "the spur of a clear spirit;"† the love of abstract glory, the thirst of pure distinction, the enthusiasm of uncorrupted emulation, the exultation of simple victory.

But a principle such as this, was obviously of too fine and subtile a nature to operate but on the more "erected spirits" of a nation, and during the more uncorrupted periods of its history. We perceive, accordingly, the nationality of the Athenian people speedily degenerating from ambition

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* Οἱ ἡμετεροι προγονοι φιλοτιμως ως αλληλους ειχον, ουκ εχθρους, αλλ' ανταγωνιστας, σφας αυτους νομιζοντες ειναι. Isocrat. Paneg. p. 58. Ἡ πολις αγωνιζομενη περι πρωτειων, και τιμης, και δοξης. Demosth. de Corona, p. 174.

† Milton's Lycidas.

into vanity, from generous emulation into egotistical self-importance, and it is under this form that we find it most prominently displayed in the national character. It was no wonder, certainly, that the inebriations of absolute power at home, and continued victory abroad, combined in one intoxicating draught, and sweetened by the adulation of innumerable flatterers, whom a despot never lacks,* should have pampered the Athenian character into the very fanaticism of national pride; that the drunkenness of self-love should have thrown Demus off his balance; and that, giddy with inordinate vanity, he should have appeared to himself the very centre round which the universe revolved. The interest, the glory of THE CITY† presently became an idol, to which every individual interest and glory

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* See examples in Isocr. Panegyr., Aristid. Panathen., and especially that admirable mimicry of the panegyrical orators which Aspasia delivers in her rhetorical lecture to Socrates, as recorded in the Menexenus of Plato. Τμιν συμβεβηκεν, ω μεν ταις εκκλησιαις τρυφαν και κολακευεσθαι, παντα προς ηδονην ακουουσιν. Demosthen. Philipp. iii. p. 65. Ωσπερ γαρ ο Σωκρατης ελεγεν· Ου χαλεπον Αθηναιους εν Αθηναιοις επαινειν. Aristot. Rhetor. i. 9.

† Η πολις or Το Αστυ was the ordinary name of Athens among the Athenians. So much indeed had Astu become a proper name that we find the Latin authors using it untranslated. For example Terence, Eun. v. 6. Corn. Nep. in Themist. 4.

were sacrificed without remorse. If treasures were known to lie concealed in private coffers, which might be useful in meeting the exigencies, or contributing to the pleasures of the state, there never was any difficulty in finding a sycophant to inform, or an orator to propose, or an assembly to sanction the appropriation. Demosthenes, even when, in his speech on the finances, he dissuades from this method of raising supplies, never hints at its injustice, but only demonstrates its inexpediency; he dares not utter treason by saying the people had no right, but simply declares the state of the fact, that for the present they had no motive.* If on any occasion the fame of a distinguished individual threatened to overshadow the lustre of the people's glory, the ostracism, an institution for that case made and provided, could banish him politely, and make not his delinquencies, but his merits an occasion of civilly hinting to him: "If any one excel among us, we have no objections to his excelling elsewhere."† Phidias

* Demosthen. περὶ Συμμοριων, p. 107. See also the speech of Charmides in Xenophon's Symposium, Oper. p. 516.

† This saying is quoted by Helvetius (De l'Esprit, ii. 3. Not. C.) as having been current among the Ephesians, an Athenian

was sent into exile for inserting an individual portrait on the buckler of his master-image of Minerva;* while Pericles was allowed to squander at will the treasures of the state, because he was careful to inscribe on all his works "Ὁ Δημος Αθηναιων."† It was not Miltiades to whom Athens confessed herself beholden for the day at Marathon, but to the Μαραθωνομαχοι with whom she supplied him;‡ or Cimon to whom she held herself indebted for the acquisition of her brilliant empire; that she regarded as the natural inheritance of the grand nation of antiquity;§ and as Demus looked round upon his beautiful city, crowded with the trophies

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colony. It is, however, at least as expressive of the spirit of the mother city.

* Plut. in Pericl. † Plut. ibid.

‡ Ενταυθα ἡ εν Μαραθωνι μαχη γεγραπται· τις ουν ην ὁ στρατηγος; οὑτωσι μεν ερωτηθεντες ἁπαντες αποκρινοισθε αν, ὁτι Μιλτιαδης· ἐκει δε ουκ επιγεγραπται· πως; ουκ ητησε την δωριαν ταυτην; ητησεν, αλλ' ὁ δημος ουκ ἐδωκεν. Æschin. c. Ctesiph. 62. Αχαριστος αρ' ην ὁ δημος; ουκ, αλλα μεγαλοφρων. Ibid. 61. Και γαρ τοι των ἐργων ουδενος των τοτε απεστερησαν ἑαυτους, ουδ' εστιν ουδεις ὁστις αν εἰποι την εν Σαλαμινι ναυμαχιαν Θεμιστοκλειους, αλλ' Αθηναιων· ουδε την εν Μαραθωνι μαχην Μιλτιαδου, αλλα της πολεως. Demosthen. περι Συνταξ. p. 100. Ανδρες Μαραθωνομαχοι. Aristoph. Nub. 986.

§ Æschin. c. Ctesiph. 62.

of victory, the pomp of richès, and the decorations of art, the one sentiment which filled his mind was that of the Babylonian despot: "Is not this the great city which I have built, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?"* Nor was this national pride confined to any rank in the state. The very stall-women and sausage-sellers of Aristophanes are zealots for the democracy, and the utmost length to which street-railing in Athens could carry its abuse, was to call a man μισοδημος† "a people-hater;" nay, if we are to believe the Platonic Socrates, no one that had not had experience on the subject, could believe how much more democratical the very animals were at Athens than anywhere else; "for," he adds, "even the dogs here, as the proverb says, are become my very good masters, and the

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* Daniel, iv. 30.

† They could smell such treason in the most trifling peculiarities of dress, as the French discover a man's politics from the dishes he eats of at dinner. Vide Aristoph. Vesp. 473.—

——— Ω μισοδημε,
Και μοναρχιας ερασται,
Και ξυων Βρασιδα, και φιλων
Κρασπιδα στιμματων, στην δ' υ-
πνην ακουρον τριβων.

horses and asses have a fashion of foaming and tossing their heads with a peculiarly free and magisterial air; nay you will see them, on the streets, actually knock a man down, unless he promptly take himself out of their highnesses' way." "Too well," exclaims the other person in the dialogue, "I know it by experience; for more than once, in going to the country, it has been my own sad fate."*

Such was that famous patriotism which formed the great spring of the whole Athenian character; and the force of its elasticity may be estimated by the boundless activity of mind which it produced, and the multitude of able men whom it called into notice, in all departments of exertion.† There are authors who lament, as the greatest calamity in the history of Athens, the triumph of pure democracy over the limited constitution of Solon. In one respect, that is, as far as the general comfort

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* Plato de Repub. viii. tom. ii. p. 563. The whole passage of which the ludicrous conclusion is given above is strongly to the point, and well worthy of being perused for its sagacity and eloquence.

† On the power of strong passions, especially vanity, in forming a brilliant national character, see Helvetius de l'Esprit, ii. 16, iii. 25. Montesquieu. Esprit des Loix, xix. 9.

of the community was concerned, the introduction of pure democracy was certainly a loss; but, in another respect, that is, in reference to all that for which Athens now is memorable in the eyes of men, and which grew out of the intense excitement of genius of every sort, it was the greatest of blessings. It is only in a democracy that all the genius of a country becomes public property, and is brought into activity for public ends. Accordingly, in surveying both the literary and the moral character of Athens, we shall see the whole system of training pervaded, stimulated, and, in some degree, limited, by the reaction of this proud nationality; and find it operating on the national, as selfishness does on the individual mind, imbuing and controlling with imperceptible influence, all the sayings and doings of the man, prompted though they may be, each by its own specific motive.

We have thus traced the origin, and explained the nature, of the two great principles out of which we conceive the Athenian character to have been compounded; a free human genius, and an intense national vanity. The one gave to their character its power, the other its direction; the one gave its possessors the capacity of eminence in all departments, the other the desire of

eminence in most departments; the one supplied the materials of activity, the other set them in motion. Neither the one nor the other, however, contained in it any principle of control, any determining bias, any moral law. Uncontrolled nature is ever versatile, and conscious despotism is proverbially capricious. The character, then, which we should expect to emerge out of the effervescent mixture of these elements, is one which, in those walks where the pleasure of man is directly ministered to, whether by sense or by intellect, should rise to unrivalled excellence; but, in those where the morality of man is exercised, in the habits of action and the pursuits of virtue, should prove itself the easy victim of vacillation and corruption, like her, the goddess born of the sea foam, the deity at once of beauty and licentiousness, queen of all arts that decorate the person, slave of all allurements that seduce the passions. Such was the actual result; and, as a general description, Athens, compared with the commonalty of nations, may be truly said to resemble those minds of eccèntric orbit, compared with ordinary men, of whom the world has seen too many for its happiness; individuals gifted with those transcendent and original talents, which are deno-

minated genius, but who, on the strength of that very genius, have deemed themselves above all laws of ordinary existence; have spurned at every check, either to the range of their thoughts, or the freedom of their wills,—the very comets of the intellectual system of the world.

After this general description, then, of the two leading and pervading peculiarities of the Athenian character, forming as it were the outline and the expression of the portrait we are sketching, we proceed to fill up the picture with some of the more special lines and features which it comprehends; describing first those connected with the genius, and then those pertaining to the morality of the nation, and expecting in the former to find as much to admire, as in the latter we shall meet with little to respect.

1. We have already seen, in describing the general developement of mind which the early education of the Athenian people occasioned, how the fine organization, the cultivating climate, the soil rich in silver and marble, the communication of oriental arts, the vernal feeling of an early age, the fanciful system and dazzling services of an imaginative religion, the adorned humanity of antique poetry, the accomplishments of a gym-

nastic and musical education, the eager competition and the brilliant rewards of a popular government, the riches and the glory of a splendid empire,—all combined their influences in the formation of an element peculiarly congenial to the growth of mind in general; and out of which we accordingly find emerging individual displays of every variety of talent. But, on descending to particulars, though we perceive in the national mind distinct traces of its capacity for excelling in all departments of genius, yet we see the actual expression of favour and patronage from the sovereign people in a great degree limited, by the predominant nationality, to those classes of pursuits which have a public character, and which are either necessary to the administration, or conducive to the enjoyment of the state.

Of those arts which are of importance in the administration of the state, the two most striking are war and eloquence. On the eminence of Athens in the former art we need not dwell, this species of glory being too vulgar and palpable in its nature, to be overlooked or greatly misapprehended; we shall therefore make only two remarks in regard to it. The *first* is, that even Sparta, the city which made military distinction

the prime and almost the exclusive object of her whole constitution and policy, did not produce captains* at all comparable in number and talents, or achieve exploits approaching in brilliance to those of Athens. Compared with Miltiades, Themistocles, Cimon, Alcibiades, Conon, Iphicrates, and Xenophon, who would rank Pausanias, Lysander, or even the hero Brasidas,† higher than second rate generals? Agesilaus is their only Lacedæmonian peer. In the great war against the Barbarians, Marathon,‡ Salamis, Artemisium, Mycale, Eurymedon, and, in a great measure, Platæa, were A-

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* Στρατηγοι σοφωτατοι, και εξυτατοι, και ασφαλεστατοι και δικαιοτατοι, και πλειους η συμπαντες οι Ἑλληνες. Aristid. Panath. 88. "I cannot help wondering, said Philip, at the good fortune of the Athenians—I have not been able in my whole life to find more than a single general, but the Athenians never fail at the critical moment to find ten every year." Plut. Apophth. Philipp. 2. The remark was in the utterance a bitter sarcasm, but there was really room for the wonder it expresses.

† Whom Plato (Conviv. tom. iii. p. 221.) justly compares to Achilles, a great warrior rather than a good general.

‡ Εις εκεινο το εργον αποβλεψαντες, και τας υστερας μαχας ετολμησαν διακινδυνευειν οι Ἑλληνες, μαθηται των εν Μαραθωνι γενομενοι. Plato. Menexen. tom. ii. p. 240. Where the whole subject of the warlike merits of the Athenians is largely discussed. See also Isocr. Paneg. p. 51—64.

thenian fields. The sacrifice of Thermopylæ, (which, however, is instead of a hundred victories) and half the triumph of Platæa, are Sparta's share of credit. Even the victory of Ægospotamos, which at length gave her the superiority in military power, was more of the nature of an accident than a just exploit. Our *second* observation is, that there were peculiarities in the case of Athens, which, even were other circumstances equal, would make her military greatness more remarkable than that of any other nation. Military eminence has been in every other case acquired by the use of disciplined troops. Among the Spartans and the Romans, as in modern warfare, the general had nothing to do but to command, the soldier nothing but to obey. Among the Athenians, there could be no such distinct recognition of the difference between the commander and the private soldier. The latter was a judge of the plan of battle; the former was an active warrior in its execution. The common soldier was, equally with the general, a legislator and a judge of the state; and, if abroad he was nominally subject to his officers, so soon as they returned home together, his officers were really subject to him. To him, as a member of the sovereign people, all public servants were responsible,

and by his vote they might be acquitted or condemned. In this relative situation of the general and his troops, to conduct a military enterprise to a successful issue, implied a greater genius for command on his part,* and a greater genius for operations on theirs, and every achievement effected was more creditable to the talents of both, than it can be in those cases where armies are considered, merely as masses of mechanical force to be passively directed by the will of an individual, and not as collections of men and citizens having a right to think and feel for themselves.†

It was thus that, in the military as well as the civil life of the Athenians, a mastery over the arts of persuasion became the most indispensable of all prerequisites for a man who aspired to power in the state; and it was from the identity of the qualifications necessary for the management of an Athenian army abroad, and an Athenian *ecclesia* at home, that a union, comparatively rare in other

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* Dans tout gouvernement ou le peuple est le distributeur des graces, ou les honneurs sont le prix du merite, l'esprit de conduite n'est autre chose que le genie meme, et le grand talent.

Helvetius de l'esprit, iv. 13.

† See Prof. Heeren Ueber die Feldherrn des Alterthums. Historische Werke, b. III.

states and ages, is so nearly uniform in the history of Athens, that of the consummate statesman and the accomplished general in the same individual. The power of persuasion was all in all to a political man at Athens;* and hence the unrivalled eminence attained by that art in a state, which has been well described by Hobbes as "an aristocracy of orators, occasionally interrupted by the monarchy of a single orator."† Among subsidiary circumstances favourable to the growth of eloquence at Athens, we might speak of the strong constitution, of the delicate ear, of the climate so full of inspiration, of the religion so rich in imagery, of the poetry so congenial in character, and especially of that language made for eloquence, of which a humble imitator of the great ancients has as justly as powerfully said, "that none can approach it in tension, and rapidity, and energy, and all the qualities of debate."‡ But in this case all minor influences disappear from view, in com-

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* In his (Aristide et Themistocle) cognitum est quanto antistaret eloquentia innocentiæ, &c. Corn. Nep. in Aristid. I.

† De Corpore Politico, ii. 5.

‡ Του γε δια παντων αγωνος, και τονου, και δρομου, και κρατιστης της αν εις τ' ειη πλησιον αληθειν, ἑτερων κομιζων γλωτταν. Aristid. Panathen. 83.

parison with the predominant control exerted by political circumstances. In a city where oratory was the passport to every place of distinction and emolument; where a populace equally distinguished for perfection of taste,* and susceptibility of impression, was supreme and uncontrolled arbiter of every controversy;† where the alternative of life or death, of glory or infamy, of political power or political overthrow, might hinge upon the pivot of a smooth sentence, or, it might be, a well chosen word;‡ where the arena of debate was equally open, and the golden prize of victory equally proposed to all; where the orator felt himself addressing a whole nation of "freemen,

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* Semper fuit prudens sincerumque judicium, nihil ut possent nisi incorruptum audire et elegans. Eorum religioni cum serviret orator, &c. Cicer. Orat. viii.

† See the effects of the presence of a multitude in stimulating that eloquence whose characteristic is intensity and power beautifully illustrated in the third volume of Mr Stewart's Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, pp. 209—213.

‡ Semper oratorum eloquentiæ moderatrix fuit auditorum prudentia. Cicer. Orat. viii. Of the infinite pains which Demosthenes took in the elaboration of the minutest clauses of his orations, some very curious instances are given by Mr. Brougham in his Inaugural Address to the University of Glasgow, and in the Edinburgh Review, Articles on Demosthenes, vols. xxxiii and xxxvi.

Greeks, Athenians,"* assembled in the full light and air of day, with Marathon and Salamis in view, under the shadow of a mountain sacred to the goddess of counsel and covered with the miracles of her art, upon a theatre where she herself had once sat in judgment on the fury-haunted parricide, while gods debated the cause at her tribunal;† it is not wonderful that eloquence should have dilated herself to a fulness of dimension such as she never reached elsewhere.‡ Some idea may be formed of the extent and enthusiasm of the popular passion for eloquence among the Δημος Πνυκιτης,§ from the number of

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* So we may apply the sentence which Pericles used to repeat to himself in the act of assuming the general's mantle. Περικλεις, Περικλεις, ελευθερων μελλεις αρχειν, Ἑλληνων και Αθηναιων. Plut. Apophthegm. Pericl. i.

† See the latter half of the Eumenides of Æschylus. It is impossible, on the present occasion, to make but a distant allusion to the Pnyx without calling to mind, that it is to the noble President of the Royal Commission, that the world is indebted for the discovery of the position and remains of that throne of Grecian eloquence.

‡ Nec unquam ibi desunt linguæ promptæ ad plebem concitandam, quod genus, quum in omnibus liberis civitatibus, tum præcipue Athenis, ubi oratio plurimum pollet, favore multitudinis alitur. Liv. xxxi. 44.

§ Aristoph. Equit. 42.

orators and teachers of oratory whose names have descended to us, as having flourished in a period within the limits of an ordinary life. Among the theorists, the subtle Protagoras, the imaginative Prodicus, the elaborate Gorgias, with Polus, Lycymnius, Alcidamas, Theodorus, and Evenus, of inferior note; among the artists, the Olympian Pericles,* the subtle Lysias, the sweet Isocrates, the lively Iseus, the sounding Æschines, the austere Lycurgus, the acute Hyperides, the impetuous Dinarchus, the witty Demades, the dignified Phocion, the thunderer Demosthenes, with Antiphon, Andocides, Callistratus, and a hundred others of less distinguished renown, are names which, by

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* We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of quoting the magnificent couplet from which this epithet is taken, though its terms be familiar as household-words to every scholar.

Εντευθεν οργη Περικλεης δυλυμπιος,
Ηστραπτεν, εβρουτα, ξυνεκυκα την Ελλαδα.

Aristoph. Acharn. 530.

In like manner, Eupolis, though without the majesty of Aristophanes:

——————— προς δε γ' αυ τουτῳ ταχ' ἡ
Πειθω τις επεκαθητο τοισι χειλεσιν.
Οὑτως εκηλει, μονος των ῥητορων
Το κεντρον εγκατελιπε τοις ακροωμενοις.

Ap. Diodor. Sic. xii. 40.

their multitude and political importance, attest the sway maintained by eloquence over the public mind at Athens.* From the time, indeed, when the persuasions of Solon first induced his countrymen not to despair of Salamis, to the period when the collision of Æschines and Demosthenes struck out the spark of that conflagration which consumed the liberties of Greece, all the important events of Athenian history ultimately depended on the dominion of eloquence, and are all so many testimonies of the power, with which the national enthusiasm for oratorical greatness invested

> Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will that fierce democraty,
> Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece,
> To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.†

While the arts useful in the political management of the state were cultivated with such ardent zeal, those which contributed to its embellishment, or to the social gratification of the citizens, were not neglected. In this part of our subject we

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* For these names and characters, See Cicero's Rhetorical Works, passim.

† Milton Par. Reg. iv.

find the remark of the Abbè Barthelemi strikingly verified, that the Greeks, meaning the Athenians, always honoured the talents which contributed to their enjoyment more than those which aimed at their instruction.* Thus it is that we observe, throughout the era of Athenian independence, the fine arts cultivated with unbounded eagerness, while philosophy was, if not contemned and hated, at least neglected and disliked. When philosophy first found admission into Athens, it was long after Thales in Ionia, and Pythagoras in Magna Græcia, had established flourishing schools which, with no ignoble success, pursued the interpretation of nature. When she did arrive at length, ('sera tamen respexit inertem,') it was under the borrowed garb of a teacher of rhetoric, and handmaid of democracy;† and if, in any case, her disguise

* Les Grecs ont toujours plus honoré les talens qui servent à leurs plaisirs que ceux qui contribuent à leur instruction. Voyage d'Anacharsis, Introd. sub fin. See especially on this subject the first part of Bishop Warburton's Introduction to his Julian; an Essay which we hesitate not to describe as one of the happiest efforts of that extraordinary genius, stupendous intellect working with stupendous learning for its tool.

† Plato makes Socrates reproach the sophists for having depart-

was seen through, a speedy flight was her best resource. Anaxagoras, the first philosopher who ventured into Athens,* and promulgated there the great doctrine of one intelligent Creator, was condemned to death by the tyrant populace;† and it was with difficulty that even the eloquence of Pericles could save the venerable man, from whose instructions that eloquence was in a great degree derived, on the hard condition of his going into perpetual exile. Protagoras, the celebrated inventor of the *loci communes*, and founder of the school of Sophists, who, while he confined himself to the education of the young demagogues of Athens in the arts of a beguiling rhetoric, was followed with lavish popularity,‡ no sooner began to propound his philosophical opinions, than he was banished by a

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ed in devoting themselves to politics, from the example of the ancient sages, Hipp. Min. tom. i. 363.

* Οὐτως μετηγαγεν απο της Ιωνιας Αθηναζε την διατριβην. Clem. Alexandr. Strom. ii.

† Θαυμασαι δ' εστιν ὡς ουτος πρωτος παρ' Ελλησι τουτον διελογησας τον τροπον, δοξας Αθηναιοις αθεος ειναι, ὁτι μη τον ἡλιον εθεολογει, τον δε ἡλιου πετρην, μικρου δειν κατιλιυσθεις εθανε. Euseb. Præp. Ev. xiv. 14.

‡ Plato. Meno. tom. ii. p. 91.

public decree, and his writings burnt in the public forum. During the whole domination of Pericles, philosophical researches were proscribed under the severest penalties; all who were devoted to them as their profession, were, by law, excluded from the city;* and those who were secretly inclined to them were obliged to hold all their communications with each other under the seal of strictest confidence. Even when Socrates, by his gigantic powers and heroic resolution, had succeeded in laying the foundation of a native Athenian philosophy on the ruins of the Protagorean delusions, he paid the forfeit with his life; and though his disciple Plato, the poet of philosophy, and, therefore, perhaps, less obnoxious to a poetic people, escaped without such signal marks of popular dislike, it is plain from the whole tenor of his writings, especially the Republic and the Laws, how far removed he deemed his countrymen from the genuine love of science. This opinion was ratified by Aristotle soon afterwards, when he deemed it prudent to escape beyond the reach of the democracy, observing, that he was unwilling to give the Athenians occasion of of-

* Σωφοκλης δι τις ψηφισμασι ιξηλασι παντας τους φιλοσοφους της Αττικης. Athen. xiii. p. 610.

fending twice against Divine philosophy.* The fact, therefore, of the popular aversion of the Athenians to the pursuits of pure intellect, is beyond all question, and the grand reason of the fact has been already assigned in the ruling nationality of the Athenian mind, which could relish only those displays of intellect that had a public character, and which, moreover, had been naturally trained by a civilization poetical in its form and spirit, to despise the coldness of abstract truth and loathe the fatigue of its investigation.†

It is not to be imagined, however, that this exclusion of philosophy from the range of popular literature at Athens was the result of any deficiency, in the national character, of those powers which are necessary for its successful cultivation. This is demonstrated by the fact, that on the change of political circumstances which, after the battle of Chæronea, quelled that feeling of political intolerance, whence mainly we suppose this peculiarity to have originated, the public mind of Athens, like the great spirit of Cicero, sought in philosophy an occupation which might divert her recollections from the view of her political degradation, and cultivated the pursuits of science with emi-

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* Ælian. Var. Hist. iii. 36. † See Note M.

nent genius and splendid success. Even under the democracy the study of the exact sciences seems to have been so far popular at Athens, that Plato could write over the gate of the academy, without rendering its groves a desert, Μηδεις αγεωμετρητος εισιτω, and there make known to intelligent auditors his own beautiful invention of geometrical analysis.* But without appealing to such minute and isolated facts, it is easy to point out general peculiarities, in which the argumentative character of the people was not obscurely manifested. We find it displayed with remarkable force in the characteristics of that eloquence which was, beyond all other pursuits, congenial to the taste of the democracy; and which, beyond all other literature, is remarkable for the character of austerest intellectuality. It might be often employed to make "the worse appear the better reason;"† but still it was reason in its reality or its semblance which was the essence of Athenian oratory, and which alone could prevail upon the 'prudens sincerumque judicium' of the Athenian people. The fre-

* Leslie's Elements of Natural Philosophy, Introduction, p. xxiv.

† Milton Par. Lost, ii. 113.

quent use of the ellipsis and parenthesis, which Lord Monboddo has remarked as contributing so much to the celebrated δεινοτης of Demosthenes, is adapted only for an audience of singularly quick and subtle perception of argument.* It is curious to observe the taste for reasoning following the people down from the Pnyx and the tribunals, to the intercourse of ordinary life, which in almost every case we find taking a great deal more for granted than modern conversation does, making constant reference to general principles, under the form either of serious argument or oftener of ingenious sophistry and random experiment in reasoning, and altogether displaying no common degree of controversial zeal and acuteness. The same peculiarity is characteristic of the productions of general literature at Athens, in which a comprehensive reader can scarcely fail to have remarked a strong tendency to embody, in regular didactic array, the simplest statements or descriptions, where modern writers should never think of having recourse to the formularies of reasoning. Yet, with all this, it must be admitted that, during

* Monboddo on Language, vol. vi. B. 2. Attici limati et emuncti nihil inane aut redundans ferebant, Quinctil. Inst. Orat. xii. 10.

the continuance of the democracy, the intellect of the Athenians, powerful though it was, preferred the merest trifles which had any thing of social interest about them to the sublimest speculations of austere intelligence; it had a quick relish for the argumentation of the orators, and the dialectics of the sophists,* but was exasperated with the sublime speculation of Anaxagoras, and the anti-popular good sense of Socrates; capable of a reach and a subtilty which never was surpassed, when business or amusement was connected with mental exertion, it could not bear the insipidity of pursuing truth for its own sake, nor tolerate the presence of those who devoted themselves to so uncivic an occupation, while it crowned with unbounded popularity all those whose genius laboured for the public enjoyment, in the arts whether of corporeal or of mental luxury—the

* "The comedies of Aristophanes, (remarks the most brilliant of modern critics) shew in a more striking point of view than any thing else, the extreme subtlety of understanding of the ancients. Compared with Aristophanes, Rabelais, himself is plain and literal." Edinburgh Review, vol. xxvi. art. Sehlegel on the Drama. See the same peculiarity illustrated in the dialogues of Plato, not merely in those parts in which he professedly discusses abstruse and subtle points; but in the specimens of gentlemanlike conversation which form so attractive a peculiarity of his works; the opening, for example, of the Republic.

arts of refined sensuality, or of cultivated imagination.

The first illustration of this remark, which strikes us in surveying the civilized life of Athens, is to be found in the extent to which the taste for animal pleasures existed in the Athenian character, and the perfection which those arts that minister to sense attained in the Athenian community. These arts and that taste were cherished and refined by many of those peculiar influences which formed the training of the Athenian people. Such was the temperament so finely compounded, the sky so bright and voluptuous, the poetry which in its own nature, and especially in its constant combination with music and imitative dance, possessed so much of sensible and material interest, the constant flow of eastern luxury into the Piræeus and Munychia, the gymnastic and musical education, the religion which in its very essence was unmingled materialism, and in its service was filled with pomps, and idols, and dance, and song, and perfume, and all sensual dissipations. In this combination of influences, seconded by a government which cherished, and a national spirit which delighted in all public and social indulgences, there was enough to produce that full developement of

the animal nature of man, which is so strikingly characteristic of the national character of the Athenians. In the epicurism of animal delights what state could rival Athens, that Athens, where the exquisite eye dictated the graceful forms and arranged the fair proportions which became to art the models of eternal beauty; where the smell was cultivated into a passion for fragrance of all kinds, from the unsophisticated breath of the Hymettian flowers to the rich fumes of Arabian frankincense, or the poignant spirit of Indian essences, which impregnated the air of the temples, and the lounges of the forum *; where the learned palate first dubbed cooks philosophers, and rewarded the invention of a pickle with the freedom of the city;† where music used to be esteemed the main support of national manners, the musical ear was the principal organ of youthful education, and the Odeum formed one of the most powerful bribes by which Pericles knew how to charm the many-headed monster;‡ where physical health and vigour were nursed in the continual use of the palæstra, and the habits of a free, active, airy, sunshiny life;§ where physical en-

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* See note N.

† See note O.

‡ Plut. in Pericl.

§ Xen de Rep. Atheniens. p. 407.

joyment and amusement were cultivated by many an essenced bath and shady portico, many a gorgeous theatre and temple of licentiousness;* where, in one word, sensuality unfolded itself into a system of unlimited yet recondite voluptuousness, of which when we read the history in Athenæus, we should imagine, did we know no more, that we were contemplating the picture of Sybaris or Capua, of a state which, dissolved in the indulgences of sense, could have no time nor taste for loftier pursuits? How far from the truth were such a conclusion! For never was there a nation so deeply imbued with spirit as "this paragon of animals, this quintessence of dust."† Even the sensuality of the Athenians was, in some sort, spiritual, and its very excesses seem to have resulted from the operation of a highly sublimated principle though upon gross materials. It was the feeling of insufficiency in what sense could actually impart to satisfy the craving of enjoyment, that impelled them to torture its powers into such unheard of shapes. It was that lofty longing after

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* Solon himself erected a temple to Venus Demosia. Athen. xiii. p. 569.

† Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act II. Scene 2.

the infinite, which appears in all their history, that goaded them on to search out the limit as it were of physical enjoyment; and we believe it was this character of Athenian licentiousness that prevented its producing those effects, in debasing the imagination, the taste, and the courage of Athens, which are its inevitable results in every state where it is merely animal in its principle and end.

Side by side with the developement of sense in the Athenian civilization stands the developement of that faculty which most directly binds together sense and spirit,—the faculty of imagination. We have already seen how this principle was produced and nourished in the primeval character of the Athenians, how it unfolded itself in the mythology and heroic poetry of Greece, and how the study of Homer became, in consequence, the basis of Athenian education, and, continuing to be so till the final extinction of the nation, proved a most important means of perpetuating and extending the imaginative spirit. Thus though the sole dominion which imagination originally wielded over Grecian literature was, in process of time, divided among other principles, it never lost its hold upon the mind of the nation. Poetry, like Cassandra, was still inspired, when from a princess she sank

into a handmaid. The brows from which the tiara of royalty had passed away were still encircled with the fillet of the god, and ever as the Dionysiac festival* brought round the spectacles of 'gorgeous Tragedy,' or fantastic Comedy, the Athenians flocked to do the Muses homage, with an intensity and sharpness of feeling still true to Homer and imagination. In most nations the taste for poetry as poetry, that is, as it is addressed to the imagination, is the privilege of a few selected spirits;

> ——— Si quem
> Numina læva sinunt, auditque vocatus Apollo.†

There is, indeed, in most countries something that is called a popular poetry, but this, in ordinary cases, owes its popularity to accidental associations, without being founded on any real imaginative merit in the productions, and therefore without implying any genuine imaginative spirit on the part of those to whom it is interesting. The case was altogether different at Athens. On

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* These occurred twice in the year. The greater or spring Dionysiacs were celebrated in the city, when the contests of the dramatic poets took place. The less or autumnal were solemnized in the country, after the vintage.

† Virgil. Georgic. iv. 7.

the one hand, the taste for poetry was national, and, on the other, the poetry which delighted that taste was, in the purest and highest sense, imaginative. The whole system of purely Athenian poetry, it is a remarkable fact, was dramatic in its form, that is, was addressed to the nation, (for in their majestic theatres the nation met and sat uncrowded,*) and so was the expression of popular imagination, at the same time that it was the handmaid of the popular patriotism; whether it were Tragedy, stalking on "Cecropian buskin,"† that sang to the people of Minerva the early fortunes of their race, and the triumphs of their patriot arms,‡ or Comedy that ran wild through every mode of the lyre, from sublimest frenzy to grossest buffoonery, in the exercise of its high function as the FREE PRESS of Athens.

Thus determined to the dramatic form, poetry found a large domain in the Athenian civilization, both for the tragic and the comic muse. For the

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* Socrates (Plato. Conviv. tom. ii. p. 175.) speaks of more than 30,000 spectators as having attended the representation of his friend Agathon's tragedy.

† ———Grande munus
Cecropio repetes cothurno. Hor. Od. ii. 1.

‡ E. g. Euripid. Ion, Æschyl. Pers.

one the tradition of the heroic age unfolded its chequered roll, with all its wild pictures of natural and supernatural power in harmony or in conflict, sublimed into ideal grandeur, and overhung with a dim mysterious fateful interest. It was under the lurid light reflected from those far times, that Athenian tragedy assumed that high, superhuman, transcendental air, which, boldly daring in Æschylus, and serenely soaring in Sophocles, so long attracted the admiration of Athenian taste, and the attempt to soften which into a manner less remote from ordinary interest, though made by a master eminent in powers of pathos, brought on Euripides so large a portion of popular obloquy and disparagement.* While Melpomene thus found so wide and congenial a field in the past, her sportive sister enjoyed a range as ample and as appropriate in the present, amid the frivolities and humours of a people which then, even more richly than when the epithet was applied by the satirist, merited the appellation of Natio Comœda ;† and, emancipated from all con-

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* Aristoph. Ran. 830, ad fin. It is remarkable how seldom Euripides, though beyond comparison the first tragedian of his age, gained the dramatic prize.

† Juvenal. Satir, iii. 100.

straint by the influence of the god whose names were Liber and Lyæus, the free and the freedom-giver, dared boldly

> ——— To unmask the public vice,
> And, with an armed and resolved hand,
> To strip the ragged follies of the times
> Naked as at their birth.*

The most distinguished field, however, in which the imaginative genius of the old Athenians displayed itself was without controversy that of the plastic art. Long before the invasion of Xerxes, a taste for the arts of design had begun to operate in Greece.† In the series of names which have been preserved of the early professors of those arts we find Athens contributing its full complement to the catalogue;‡ and first of all the patriarch-name of Dædalus.§ The gradual growth of art, encouraged by the national poetry and national re-

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* Ben Jonson's Every Man out of his Humour. See Cumberland's Observer, No. 74, and the translation there given of the Prologue of Eupolis to his Comedy, entitled Ὁ Δημος. See also Note P.

† Pausan. ii. 34.

‡ Winkelmann, vi. 1.

§ Carlo Fea's note on Winkelmann, vi. 1.

ligion, so full of inspiration, so rich in ideal subjects, so incessant in demands on ideal genius, and expanding under a climate formed, as it were, to cherish and harmonize all that various beauty with which it was crowded, received from the events of the Persian war an impulse which soon carried Athens far beyond all rivals. The necessity of rebuilding the city after its destruction by the barbarous invader, operated as a sudden and irresistible call upon the latent genius of Athens to come forth and array, with decoration before unknown, the mighty mother of arts and arms; while the spoils of Marathon and Salamis, the tribute of the nations whom she gathered under her protection, the influx of commercial wealth, and the munificence of her patriotic citizens supplied, with exuberant profusion, the means of carrying into effect the mightiest conceptions which that genius could form of splendour and of grace.* The impulse thus com-

* Vid. Heyne ap. Winkelmann, vol. i. Note H. Ὁ των βαρβαρων πλουτος εις τους κρειττους εμερισθη· και μεντοι και τουτοις αυ παλιν η πολις, τοσουτον ἐσον περ εν αυταις ταις πραξεσι, διενεγκουσα φανησεται· και τουτο μεν γαρ την ακροπολιν κατεκοσμησε τοις των ἐργων ὑπομνημασι· και τω της φυσεως καλλει το παρα του πλουτου και της τεχνης εφαμιλλον προσεθηκεν, ὡστ' ειναι πασαν αντ' αναθηματος, μαλλον δε αντ' αγαλματος. Aristid. Panathen. p. 53.

municated by fortune was studiously carried forward and kept alive by the refined policy of Pericles, and under his brilliant administration attained that limit of perfection, of which the Parthenon still stands the shattered but inimitable monument.*

It was, however, from the character of the early Greek civilization that the plastic art of Athens received its most powerful impulse and derived its peculiar spirit. That art, in truth, was just the mythology and heroic traditions of Greece embodied in colours and in marble, and whatever character of human nature belonged to the one was of necessity the peculiarity of the other. Hence it is that the freedom and flexibility of Grecian art forms exactly the same contrast with the stiffness and constraint of the Egyptian, as the characteristics of the one religion did with those of the other; and as Winkelmann has well demonstrated, the former contrast was the direct result of the latter. It was this origin, moreover, that gave to Athenian art its high ideality of character; for, as we have already seen, the mythic and heroic poetry of

* See the gradual progress of art before and after Pericles described in Winkelmann, v. 1.

Greece exhibited a humanity not only emancipated from constraint, but sublimed into ideal power. In that poetry, then, the artists of Greece found ready constructed those central forms of human beauty, the conception of which, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has illustrated with exquisite taste and sagacity,* is the first and most important requisite to the formation of the *grand style* in art. The conception thus treated by the poets had only to be expressed in another language by the sculptor or the painter. Phidias, so happily called the Homer of sculpture, was entitled to the name not more from the similarity of his genius, than from the care with which he studied the works of his great predecessor. His image of Olympian Jupiter, whose majesty seems to have overawed with inexpressible wonder the minds of the ancient admirers of art, was merely a translation into sculpture of the three celebrated lines of the Iliad, † where the son of Saturn is represented giving the nod of fate, and, as the ambrosial

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* Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds, iii.

† Proclus. in Timæum Platon. ii. quoted by Junius De Pictura Veterum.

locks are shaken on his immortal head, and the dark brows lower with the weight of destiny; great Olympus is made to tremble. Nor were the heroic traditions of Greece less fruitful than the mythologic in ideal subjects ready made for the artist's use. The whole strain of these traditions, as we have already observed, represented in vivid colours, and under diversified forms,

> —— the dread strife
> Of poor humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny;*

and this, accordingly, we find to be the characteristic feature of those great productions of Grecian art, in which human nature is the subject,—the Laocoon, for example, and the Niobe.

The same general fact which we lately remarked in regard to Athenian poetry, deserves to be noticed as characteristic of Athenian art. The fine arts in Athens were, properly speaking, national pursuits; architecture, sculpture, painting, were public talents. Phidias, Ictinus and Parrhasius† produced their divine creations to gratify no private taste, to serve the esoteric fancies of no select

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* Wordsworth's Excursion.

† Parrhasius, though a native of Ephesus, was a citizen of

and lordly tribe of connoissours; they were the nation's ministers; their works the nation's boast; their reward the nation's munificence. Every thing, indeed, that was splendid among the Athenians was public, their private life being as remarkable for frugality and unambitiousness as their national manners for prodigality and pomp.

> Nec fortuitum spernere cespitem
> Leges sinebant, oppida publico
> Sumptu jubentes ac deorum
> Templa novo decorare saxo.*

In surveying, then, the whole range of imaginative art at Athens, and remembering its thorough nationality of character, what must we conceive to have been the fineness of the imaginative

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Athens, and seems from Xenophon's Memorabilia to have been on intimate terms with Socrates.

* Horat. Od. ii. 15. Vid. Xenoph. de Republ. Athen. p. 403. Οικοδεμηματα μεν γε και κοσμον της πολιως, ιερων, και λιμενων, και των ακολουθων τουτοις τοιουτων και τοσουτον κατιλιπον εκεινοι, ωστε μηδενι των επιγιγνομενων υπερβολην λειλειφθαι προπυλαια ταυτα, νεωσοικοι, στοαι, τἀλλα οἰς εκεινοι κοσμησαντες την πολιν ἡμιν παρεδωκαν· τας τε ιδιας οικιας των εν δυναμει τοτε γενομενων οὑτω μετριας, και τῳ της πολιτειας ονοματι ακολουθους, ὡστε την Θεμιστοκλειους, και την Κιμωνος, και της Αριστειδου, και Μιλτιαδου, και των τοτε λαμπρων, εστις αρα οιδεν ὁμων ἁποια τ' εστιν, ορᾳ της τοτε γειτονος ουδεν σεμνοτεραν ουσαν. Demosthen. περι Συνταξ. p. 101.

feeling in the breasts of a people, which inspired them with a genuine relish for the productions of an ideal genius so clear and pure, so independent of vulgar trickery, and sentimental sympathy, and all adventitious interest, as that which breathes in Athenian tragedy and Athenian art! What must have been the wideness of its range, which, sensitive to the impulse of imagination in all the various phases of its starry influence—its power in Homer, its ethereality in Pindar, its audacity in Æschylus, its harmony in Sophocles, its richness in Aristophanes, its mellowness in Euripides, its divine sublimity in Phidias, its truth to nature in Praxiteles, its enchanting gracefulness in Myron, its expressive subtlety in Parrhasius, its fanciful boldness in Zeuxis, its heroic dignity in Timanthes, its finished perfection in Apelles,*—enabled the national taste to harmonize with them all! And what, finally, must have been the power of that pervading enthusiasm for imaginative art, which wrought so intensely in exciting the genius of poets and of artists to efforts so brilliant in exe-

* For these characters we must refer generally to the remains of the poets whose names we have enumerated, and to the information which Winkelmann has collected with regard to the characteristic peculiarities of the artists.

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cution and so exuberant in number, as have made the era of Pericles the brightest page, not merely in the history of Athenian civilization, but in that of the ideal genius of mankind!

Out of the various growth of talent which we have described, it was natural that another principle, yet more refined and ethereal, should arise in the Athenian character. That principle is the faculty of intellectual taste. Considering this name, as descriptive of the faculty which enables us to form a nice and accurate estimate of the works of art, it is plain that the perfection of taste will naturally spring from the perfect developement of the power which supplies it with materials, with models, and with experience. Now, as a great critic has observed, "there only, where invention, sociality, eloquence, and beauty, were equally naturalized; where the peculiar merits of the Doric and Ionic individual civilizations were combined into one perfect and complete; where an unlimited freedom and equality allowed the internal being of man to display itself in distincter relief; and the active strife, and many-sided friction of external circumstances contributed to sharpen, polish, round, and consolidate its various parts,—that is, in Athens only was the perfection

of Grecian art a thing possible."* But in the causes by which the perfection of the various liberal arts was produced among the Athenians, are involved the reasons of that high finishing of taste which completed their mental character. For the power of judging of art, like all the other mental powers, must be improved just as it is exercised, and it will be exercised just in proportion as the essays of art in all departments are multiplied. This faculty, from its original constitution, has the capacity of ever conceiving something more excellent than has been already attained, and therefore as the powers of execution are improved, the perceptions of taste are refined in the same degree; and thus it was that, in the natural progress of the fine arts at Athens, that bloom of national taste evolved itself, which distinguished the age of Sophocles and the Parthenon.

——— So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More airy, last the bright consummate flower
Spirit odorous breathes.†

* Translated from Schlegel, Kritik und Theorie der Poesie, kap. ii.

† Milton. Par. Lost, v. 479.

To this its origin, not in any accidental bias, but in the natural growth of mind, the taste of the Athenians is indebted for the grand peculiarity by which it is distinguished, the absolute naturalness of its standard. Contemplating nature, yet unwrinkled by age, and imperverted by affectation, in a land "where," as Schlegel says, "beauty grew wild," and amidst the vernal charms of existence, they sought no models nor criterion of beauty away from her. The beauty of Athenian art is beauty of the simplest and most obvious kind; a beauty which depends more on perception than on conception; a beauty really existing in nature, not created by the imagination; a beauty of which intellect can point out the causes in the actual qualities of the objects admired, and needs not seek an explanation in the reflex emotions of the admiring mind.* Athenian taste was, in truth, the passionate love of nature, both in matter and in mind, and the most recondite of its feelings was only that of the limit

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* See this distinction between *objective* and *subjective* beauty, as the Germans phrase it, the grand distinction between the classical and the romantic, or the ancient and the modern styles, illustrated in Schlegel on the Drama, cap. i.

guard of nature;* not of our nature, indeed, but of their own, which made an infinity of "objects that are ideal to us, natural to them." The traces of this principle are distinct on the whole system of art and literature at Athens, its architecture, its sculpture, its oratory, its tragedy, its manners, and, we scruple not to add, when interpreted on right principles, its comedy. The fairest abstractions of Athenian art were modelled after living forms of loveliness,† and the essence of the Attic style in literature was freedom from the forced, the affected, and unnatural. Hence arises the want of interest, which characterizes the monuments of Athenian genius to those who have been fed from infancy on nothing but the stimulants of modern literature, and have never been trained by classical discipline, to that austere discrimination of what is true and natural, which is the only healthy tone of genius, and with the loss of which in the literature of a nation, the only safe-

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* Une infinité des choses qui sont ideales pour nous, etoient naturelles pour eux. Winkelmann, Histoire de l'Art, iv. 1. Cf. Caylus, Recueil de l'Academie des Inscriptions, tom. xix. p. 451.

† The Venus Anadyomene of Apelles and the Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles were taken from the celebrated Phryne. Athen. xiii. p. 500. See other instances in Plin. H. N. xxxv.

guard against endless extravagance is removed. "Attic," in literary taste, is merely the superlative degree of "classical."

But in speaking of the taste of the Athenian people, we do not mean by that term, according to its more technical import, the mere capacity of judging of art, but we intend, according to the ordinary use of language, to describe under a general term a number of those more minute and subtile peculiarities of mind, which generally distinguish a refined from a rude and uncultivated intellect. Now, among all the various feelings of this description which have been concentrated in the faculty denominated taste, those of beauty and of wit seem to have exercised the greatest power over the Athenians, and to have been cultivated with greatest assiduity, as ministering most directly to the embellishment of their own adored city, and flattering most delicately their cherished national vanity. The Athenians seem to have been the first nation in the world that discovered, as it were, the virgin idea of beautiful form; and they worshipped it with the fervour of a first love. It pervaded all their mind and life, and diffused a spirit of grace over the greatest and pettiest details of their existence. It made them the builders

of the Parthenon, and the inventors of the potter's wheel;* it gave them Phidias the sculptor and Architeles the stone-cutter.† The same perfect and instinctive taste, which moulded the majestic graces of the Panathenaical Minerva, breathed in the outline of the earthen pitcher with which the Athenian handmaid used to draw water from Cephisus. In short, the whole existence of the Athenians seems to have been spent under the continual impression of beauty, particularly that of form, either conjured up by the thoughtful mind itself from its treasures of internal taste, or reflected from the visible shapes of loveliness with which nature or art had embellished "the museum of Hellas," "the hearth and prytaneum of the Greeks," "the Greece of Greece," on every side.

Yet it was not in the sense of beauty merely that

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* Τον τε τροχον γαιης τε καμινου σ' εκγονον ευρε,
Κλεινοτατον κεραμον χρησιμον ανθρωποις,
Η τε καλον Μαραθωνι κανασσησασα τροφαιον.
Critias ap. Athen. i. p. 18.

Ought we not to read in the second line κλυνοτατων κεραμεων?

† Winkelmann, iv. 2.

‡ Το της Ελλαδος μουσειον, ην ὁ μεν Πινδαρος Ελλαδος ερεισμα εφη.

Athenian taste consisted, but in the combination of a thousand dim and delicate feelings, which scarcely have obtained separate names in intellectual philosophy, but which may generally be described as constituting Athenian urbanity. The το αστειον of which we now speak, it is easier to feel in reading Aristophanes,* than to describe in any language less flexible and discriminating than his own. It was very far from being equivalent to that extreme and almost morbid sensitiveness to every thing tending, directly or indirectly, to convey disgusting associations, which distinguishes good manners in modern times. From the slight degree of intercourse subsisting between the virtuous portions of the two sexes, Athenian urbanity was of a thoroughly masculine character, and deeply tinged with that indelicacy which was never before the promulgation of christianity felt as a sin against taste, perhaps not even as an offence against morality. What we should consider in-

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Θουκυδιδης δ' εν τω εις Ευριπιδην επιγραμματι 'Ελλαδος 'Ελλαδα· ὁ δε Πυθιος ἑστιαν και πρυτανειον των 'Ελληνων. Athen. v. p. 187.

* Hence the famous epigram of Plato:

Αἱ χαριτες τιμενος τι λαβειν ἁπιᾳ ουχι πεσουσαι
Ζητουσαι, ψυχην εὑρον Αριστοφανους.

deed as the descriminating peculiarity of Athenian refinement,—the produce obviously of that system of government which united in one sovereign society all the gradations and the very extremes of rank,—is the universality of apprehension and relish by which it was enabled to sympathize with every mode of striking, pleasing, amusing, poignant, or expressive thought and diction, and to take in all those impressions which give zest to social intercourse, whether such as, with us, excite the roar of the rabble on the street, or such as send the smile through the circles of a court. This general urbanity of Athens, then, includes that remarkable susceptibility of wit and humour which could trace them in all their ever-shifting hues from the most ribald buffoonery of Aristophanes up to the most ethereal irony of Plato; that delicate feeling of propriety with which the democracy abstained from reading the intercepted letter of its most formidable enemy, because it was addressed to his wife;* that love of order, of proportion, of congruity, of the το πρεπον in the widest sense, which is displayed in the Athenian mode of group-

* Plut. de ger. Rep. iii.

ing, whether in the act of placing some fair and stately edifice amid the surrounding loveliness or majesty of nature, or of arranging the masses of poetry in a Sophoclean tragedy, or of adapting every word and pause to produce effect in a Demosthenic oration; in a word, that peculiar indescribable air of what we can call by no other name than their own, that "atticism,"* corresponding in some degree to the air of high fashion in modern times, only far more intellectual, compounded of wit, and elegance, and politeness, and vanity, and the sense of dignity, and the expression of irony in their own peculiar sense of the term,† making a man feel his inferiority without giving him an opportunity of being offended, which communicated to their very countenance the

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* Ille Latinus ατττικισμος. Cicer. ad Attic. iv. 17. "Atticus lepos" is Jerome's phrase. Epistol. 101.

† Genus est perelegans et cum gravitate salsum. Cic. de Orat. ii. 67. De Græcis autem, dulcem et facetum, festivique sermonis, atque in omni oratione simulatorem, quem ειρωνα Græci nominaverunt, Socratem accepimus. Cic. de Off. i. 30. See a very happy, though according to the author's fashion, somewhat overloaded description of Athenian irony in Wieland's Aristipp. i. 8.

inimitable Attic glance,* and seasoned their speech with the unrivalled poignancy of Attic salt.†

From the preceding review we may form a tolerably correct idea of the general mental character of the Athenians, as displayed in their tastes for literature and art. Directed by predominant nationality, and trained under appropriate influences, their whole genius was of a public character; they disliked, with more than simple aversion, what was private and abstract; they cherished, with more than simple enthusiasm, what was social and popular in intellectual pursuit; they banished philosophy and worshipped art; they cared not to be informed, but they liked to be swayed, excited, entertained; they could not endure what Heraclitus called the "dry light"‡ of pure sci-

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* Αττικον βλιττος, Aristoph. Plut. 1177. See Note Q.

† Και πως εγω Σθενιλου φαγοιμ' αν ρημα τι
Εις εξος εμβαπτομενον η λευκους αλας;
Aristoph. ap Athen. ix. p. 367.

The metaphor of salt in conjunction with the epithet "Athenian" is not employed at random, one of the principal manufactures of Attica having been sea-salt of remarkable fineness and flavour. Mannert's Geographie des Griechenlandes, p. 271.

‡ Αυγη ξηρα ψυχη αριστη vel σοφωτατη, a maxim ingeniously commented on by Lord Bacon in his Advancement of Learning,

ence, but turned to regale themselves with the arts of sense, imagination, feeling, and taste; the "watery light" which hangs rainbows in the clouds, and sheds a dewy garniture over the green earth. Their national mind was more lively than strong; more ingenious than profound; more brilliant than solid; but of all lively, ingenious, and brilliant characters it was the most vivacious, the most acute, and the most splendid.

2. We now turn, in the second place, to contemplate a scene less pleasing but more instructive, the moral character of the Athenians, as unfolded in their politics and manners.

The first circumstance which strikes us in this department of survey, is the incessant activity of the Athenian people. The whole system of causes from which the Athenian character sprang, was a combination of the elements of activity. The well-strung frame, the lively scenery, the exhilarating air, the youthful age, the religion which was

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book i. Works. vol. i. p. 5. The true reading of this maxim is disputed. Wesseling reads it perhaps more intelligibly αυη ψυχη αριστη, "animus siccus est optimus." If the old form is to be retained, perhaps we should read ψυχῃ in the dative, "a dry light is best for the mind."

one great type of nature's activity, the poetry whose principle was action, the education whose end was the developement of energy, the government which made every separate citizen a public agent, the empire which poured materials of endless exertion in one unbroken stream into the forum,—all these influences, in their separate operation, and especially when pervaded, as we have seen them, by one ruling spirit of nationality, created in Athens a spring of everlasting motion. The love of the democracy was necessarily the love of action. The freedom which that democracy, in its finished form, provided, and to which at all periods of its progress it tended, was not that *personal* liberty which is enjoyed in repose, and which consists in the security of person, property, and domestic rights against arbitrary power; but that *political* liberty which invests every citizen with a direct share in the management of the state, and the whole body of citizens with unlimited despotical authority; the freedom which is thus the element of constant passive agitation in the production of wars abroad, and revolutions at home, and of constant active exertion in the discharge of public trusts, and the evolution of public talents; the freedom which supplies unlimited

scope for the display of ability, and innumerable materials for the excitement of passion. If we look at the system, either of domestic habits or of foreign relations, which grew out of this national constitution, we shall be able to judge if the spirit of national self-love in the Athenians could be any thing but the spirit of restless activity. Their constitution, which rendered every citizen a public officer, forced every citizen to spend a public life. The business of the forum commenced at day-break, and was all transacted in the eye of the sun, by stirring men, collected in large masses, and wielded by an eloquence which knew how to rouse into tumult every element of activity in their character. The time which was not occupied in public business was filled up by the policy of the statesmen, and the imaginative tastes of the people, with public amusements, with festivals, pomps, and theatrical exhibitions. The great principle, in short, of the Attic demagogues, as explained by their great master, Pericles, was to keep the people constantly either employed or entertained.* This system of public life among the Athenians,

* Mitford, xiv. 1.

rendered necessary by the social constitution, and co-operating with the causes before enumerated, made activity the very soul of their being, and cherished all those personal habits which are of an active description. They were early risers,* fond of exercise,† constant frequenters of public walks and lounges,‡ immeasurable talkers,§ passionate news-mongers,‖ fond to excess of baths, ¶ festi-

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* ——— σπεύσαθ', ὡς ἐωθ' ἑκεῖ
Τοῖς μὴ παρουσιν ὀρθρίως ἐς τὴν Πνυκα,
Ὑποτρίχιον ἔχουσι μηδὲ κατταλον.
Aristoph. Ecclesiaz. 282.

† Κατα τας ὁδους ποιουμαι τους περιπατους· φησι γαρ ὁ Ακουμινος ακοντιζους των εν δρομοις εἰναι. Plat. Phædr. sub init.

‡ Μενον ουκ εν τοις δικαστηριοις οἰκουντας. Isocrat. de Permut. p. 317. Ποιῳ δ'ἐργαστηριῳ, ποιῳ δε μιξει της ἀγορας ου διημιξευουσιν; Theophrast. Charact. 9.

§ Την πολιν ἁπαντες Ἑλληνες ὑπολαμβανουσιν, ὡς φιλολογος ἐστι και πολυλογος. Plat. de Legg. i. tom. ii. p. 641.

‖ See the inimitable passage in the first Philippic, beginning Η βουλεσθε, εἰπε μοι, αυτων περιοντες πυνθανεσθαι κατα την ἀγορὰν "λεγεται τι καινον;" Dem. Philipp. i. p. 32. Cf. Act. Apostol. xvii. 21.

¶ See frequent allusions to these in the speech of Demosthen against Conon. Οἱ μεν εν τοις βαλανειοις περιστασεις ποιουμενοι. Theophr. Charact. 9.

vals, * spectacles,† nicknames,‡ music,§ dances,‖ symposia,¶ clubs;** every thing, in short, that supplied a social stimulus to the senses or the mind.††

It was not, however, the *internal* arrangements

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* Αγουσι μεν ἑορτας διπλασιους η οἱ αλλοι. Xenoph. de Rep. Ath. p. 407.

† Και γαρ ἱματια καλλιστα και καλλιστα κεκτηται (η πολις) τα μεν ταις δαπαναις ὑπερβαλλοντα, τα δε κατα τας τιχνας ευδοκιμουντα, τα δε αμφοτερους τουτους διαφεροντα. Isocrat. Paneg. p. 49.

‡ Περδιξ μεν εἰς κατηλος ωνομαζετο
Χωλος· Μεγακλῳ δ' ην χελιδων τουνομα·
Οκουντιῳ δ' οφθαλμον ουκ ἐχων κοραξ.
Κορυδος Φιλοκλεες· χηναλωπηξ Θεαγενει.
Ἰβις Λυκουργῳ· Χαιρεφωντι νυκτερις.
Συρακουσιῳ δε κιττα· Μειδιας δ' ικτις
Ορτυξ ἐκαλειτο· και γαρ εἰκεν ορτυγι
Ὑπο στυφοκομικου την κεφαλην πεπληγμενῳ.

Aristoph. Av. 1292. et seq.

§ See the fourteenth book of Athenæus and the treatise of Plutarch on music.

‖ Οὑτως δ' ην ενδοξον και σοφον η ορχησις, ὡς τι Πινδαρος τον Απολλω ορχηστην καλει "Ορχηστα, αγλαιας ανασσων, ευρυφαρετρ' Απολλον," Athenæ. i. p. 22. Cf. Corn. Nep. in Epaminond. ii.

¶ For examples see the Symposia of Plato and Xenophon, and for details the Deipnosophists of Athenæus.

** Athenæ. viii. p. 365.

†† Curious details on all these subjects and on the corresponding fashions in modern Greece are to be found in Douglas' Essay on certain points of resemblance between the ancient and the modern Greeks, and De Guy's letters on Greece.

merely, but the external relations also of the commonwealth, which made the love of the republic synonymous with the love of action; nor was it in their private manners only, but in their foreign politics, that this activity displayed itself. Athens was at once the greatest commercial and the greatest manufacturing town in Greece, and accordingly connected, more or less, with the whole surrounding world. Herself the most unlimited of democracies, she was the patroness of democracy throughout the Hellenic body;* the mother-city of a great jealous, unmanageable confederation, united for objects of the highest importance; and the principal power with which the greatest empire in the world held political relations. All the complicated transactions which such a state of things involved, were managed directly by the will of twenty thousand citizens, all equal in rank and right, and all jealous of their own and their nation's dignity.† The intense excitement and con-

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* Εσθ' ὑμιν ὁ πολιμος, προς μεν τους δημους δια των ιδιων ἑγκλημαστων, η περι γης μερους, η ὁρων, η φιλοτιμιας, η της ἡγεμονιας· προς δε τας ολιγαρχιας ὑπερ μεν τουτων ουδενος, ὑπερ δε της πολιτειας και της ἐλευθεριας. Demosth. pro Rhod. Libert. p. 115.

† See Xenophon's description of the immense mass of political

stant activity of the public mind which such a concentration of all elements of motion must have produced, is a thing to be imagined not described; or if described, let it be in the words of those who saw the machine in operation: "Consider," said the Corinthian ambassadors at Sparta, "what manner of men the Athenians be. They love innovation, and are swift to devise and also to execute what they resolve on. They are bold beyond their strength, adventurous above their own reason; and in danger hope still the best. They are stirrers, and love to be abroad. They, when they overcome their enemies, advance the farthest; and when they are overcome by their enemies, fall off the least; and, as for bodies, they use them in the service of the commonwealth as if they were none of theirs; but their minds, when they would serve the state, are right their own. Unless they take in hand what they have once advised on, they account so much lost of what they possessed; and when they take it in hand, if they

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business transacted by the body of Athenian citizens, and the observations so creditable to his candour which he makes in defence of the policy which had made these arrangements. Xenoph. de Rep. Athen. pp. 404. 407.

obtain any thing, they think lightly of it in respect of what they look yet to win; if they fail, they do what is necessary for the present, and enter straightway into other hopes. For they alone at once both have and hope for whatever they conceive, through their celerity in execution of what they once resolve on. And in this manner they labour and toil all the days of their lives; what they have they have no leisure to enjoy for continual getting of more; nor holiday esteem they any but whereon they effect some matter profitable; nor think they case with nothing to do a less torment than laborious business; so that, in a word, to say they are men born neither to rest themselves nor suffer others, is to say the truth."*

In the preceding extract, we find mixed up with the expression of that highly-stimulated activity which we adduced it to illustrate, the description of a remarkable and almost sublime energy of determination and pursuit, as distinctive of the Athenian character. But this latter peculiarity must be considered as belonging only to a particular age. For decision would be the last of all qualities, which

* Thucyd. i. 70, slightly altered from Hobbes's Translation.

any one who takes a comprehensive view of Athenian history would select, by which to characterise the national mind. The spirit of Athens, while she seemed to pursue that bold and vigorous course which the Corinthians describe, was yet fresh amidst the excitement of great objects and great achievements, without having had time to tire of them, or having met with the check of any serious disappointment to disgust her with them. The heat of her enthusiasm had not as yet been cooled by time or accident. For even in her age of glory, when Athens stood the bulwark of liberty, and human civilization, the love of independence, and of warlike fame which inspired her was less a principle than a passion; for the time all other motives were overborne and absorbed; the whole combustible spirit of the nation was kindled with one ardent flame, and from such remoteness we see not how fast the materials of the glory are consuming away, amid the blaze of a conflagration, for this very reason the more brilliant, that it has been excited and fanned by a sudden blast of enthusiasm. But presently a change comes over the spirit of the scene. Satiated with victory, and drunk with liberty, but un-

able to endure the tedium of indolent enjoyment, Athens, under the direction of a master politician, who saw the crisis, and knew how to turn it to his own aggrandizement, is seized with a new appetite as unbounded in its sway, and as dazzling in its results, as ever had been the thirst of military distinction; the popular passion for pleasure and the fine arts, which has immortalized the administration of Pericles. And yet later when the disasters and humiliations of the Peloponnesian war had fretted the national mind into peevishness, and the progress of civic corruption had limited the sphere, and degraded the aims of the nation's regards, we find their once noble activity degenerating into the restlessness of a chafed infant, wasting those energies on petty intrigues at home which used to be expended on great enterprizes abroad. There is nothing, in the character of his countrymen, of which Demosthenes more frequently and bitterly complains, than a certain faintness of hope, or rather recklessness of feeling in regard to consequences, mixed up with a feverish vacillation in the choice of expedients, which form an exact contrast to that spirit of the olden time which he laboured with such patriotic ardour

to revive.* The truth is, that this process of gradual degradation is just the natural history of the love of excitement wherever it becomes a ruling principle in character. It may have originated, perhaps, in circumstances which warranted its whole enthusiasm, and in which the mind derived the pleasure of poignant stimulus from the discharge of great duties. But when such occasions pass away, and leave the thirst of excitement undiminished or rather increased, (as all habits of mind are strengthened by indulgence,) then, either principle must obtain and exert a stern controul over appetite, or the passion for stimulants must have recourse to new objects, and as the sources of virtuous and legitimate excitement are exhausted, must repair to fountains less pure and less sublime. Thus it happened, that the gay and gallant enthusiasm of the age of glory at Athens, presently declined into a morbid passion for indiscriminate excitement, and that the general result of the restless tumult of action which was constantly going on in the heart of the state, uncontrolled by permanent superior

* See especially the first Philippic and the emphatic character given of the Athenians in the second Olynthiac: ἡμῶν μελλόντων, καὶ ψηφιζομένων, καὶ συνθεωμένων, p. 16.

principle, was to produce in every nerve of the national character a feverish excitability, which frequently rose to absolute delirium.

No town was ever so subject to mania as Athens, and nowhere was it more overpowering in its force, or more transient in its duration; whether it were the mania of universal empire which dictated the fatal expedition to Sicily, or that strange fancy for mimicking the manners of the feathered tribes, which gave occasion to the Birds of Aristophanes, filling the streets with the sounds of twittering, chirruping, cackling, and cooing in place of human voices and Attic speech, and transforming Athens for a time into a great Chthonococcygia.* Besides, whatever attracted the notice of the Athenians whether for good or for evil, being generally seen by them associated in one way or another with

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* i. e. Ground-cuckooburg, in allusion to the Nephelococcygia or Cloud-cuckooburg of Aristophanes.

Ορνιθομανουσι· πασται δ' ὑπο της ἡδυπνοις
Πωυσιν ἀπτερ ορνιθες, ικμιμουμενοι.
Ἡδον δ' ὑπο φιλορνιθιας παντες μιλη
Ὁπου χιλιδων ην τις ιμπεποιημενη,
Η πηνελοψ, η χην τις, η πτερισταρα,
Η στιγγις, η στεργον τι και σμικρον πρεσην.

Aristoph. Av. 1284 et seq.

the idea of *the city*, was placed by their patriotic feeling in an inconceivably striking light; and, as is always the case with a despot, whether that despot be an individual or a people, led to expressions ludicrously exaggerated of satisfaction or displeasure.* But this reason of their feeling strongly was also a reason why they felt transiently. The nationality on which their character rested was not a stable pillar, erected with the view of keeping the superstructure steady; it was a spire that supported a weathercock on a pivot polished by perpetual friction. The universal association of every object, great or minute, with the thought of the democracy made every object of almost equal importance in the people's estimation, and invested the emotion which each produced with almost equal power. A more striking illustration of this extreme susceptibility of impulse in all directions cannot be imagined, than what the life of Alcibiades presents us with. First, the object of such extravagant admiration for the beauty of his person and the

* See this mode of feeling well described, as it operated on the mind of an individual despot, by Sir Walter Scott, Life of Napoleon, vol. viii. c. 12.

elegance of his manner, that the populace which used to glory in the title of μισοτυραννος, proposed to revive in his behalf the hated authority of king; then, for a trivial frolic, condemned to death with transports of fury and execration; presently recalled and received with unbounded triumph, to be, on the next trifling failure of success, one too for which he was not responsible, again proscribed and driven to perish by barbarian hands.* Thus whatever passion ruled the mind of the Athenians, ruled it for the moment with absolute sway, and hurried them into action with a precipitation which necessarily led to as sudden a repentance.† Hence was produced that strange fickleness in regard to particular measures which forms the most striking of all peculiarities in the moral character of the Athenians,‡ and which authors have laboured for terms

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* Plut. in Alcibiad.

† Demosthenes frequently complains of the flattery paid by the orators to that tendency of the popular mind which would be satisfied with nothing but what was to be instantly and to-day. Ου γαρ οι ταχυ και ημιερον εισοντες, μαλιστα εις δειν λεγουσι. Dem. i. Philip. p. 83.

‡ Περι μεν τοινυν του καινοτομειν μη δεισης· τουτο γαρ ημιν
Δοξαν αντ' αλλης αρχαιας εστιν· των δ' αρχαιων αμιλησαι.
Aristoph. Eccles. 587.

to express, seeming to conceive of it as inconsistency without a name in the science of human nature. In no history shall we find specimens of the operation of so many various principles of action succeeding each other in alternation so rapid and unlooked for. Ασκος εν οιδματι πουτοπορευσῃ said the oracle to Theseus as the representative of his people;* and the saying was fulfilled in all its history, with every wave it rose and fell, with every breeze it veered, with every shifting current it was carried away. The whole fortunes of the nation reveal to us a national character "loose on the point of every wavering hour," and directed from time to time by all impulses which sway the will of man, by all physical appetites, intellectual principles, moral motives, and passionate influences.†

This extreme susceptibility of impulse and excitement is not the property of a very exalted national character, when estimated according to the standard either of virtue or of power. It belongs to a nation capable of performing under a strong

* Plut. in Thes.

† Εμπειροτατοι λογων και πραγματων οντες, ουτως αλογιστως εχομεν, ωστε περι των αυτων της αυτης ημερας ου ταυτα γινωσκομεν, κ. τ. λ. Isocr. de Pace. p. 170.

impulse achievements that shall seem of gigantic might or of superhuman virtue, but not of pursuing stedfastly to its consummation one great complicated enterprize; a nation fitted for making the most victorious incursions into every field of fame, but not of patiently subduing or permanently appropriating any; a nation equally capable of brilliant successes and subject to disastrous failures;* a nation fitted to become the most wonderful in the world, and, by possibility the most amiable, but neither the most respectable nor the most estimable. Capable of excursions beyond the range of ordinary duties,† which seem the sublimest efforts of strength and of virtue, the Athenian character was yet essentially weak and vicious. A truly powerful or a truly moral character must be a principled one.‡ It was the constant idea

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* Hence the fine remark of Demosthenes: Ὅσα μὲν πώποθ' ἁπάντες ὑμεῖς ἐβουλήθητε, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα τὸ βέλτιστον αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑαυτῷ προσηκεῖν ἡγήσατο, οὐδὲν πώποθ' ὑμᾶς ἐξέφυγεν· ὅσα δὲ ἐβουλήθητε μέν, μετὰ ταῦτα δὲ ἀπιβλίψατε πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ὡς αὐτὸς μὲν ἕκαστος οὐ ποιήσων, τὸν δὲ πλησίον πράξοντα, οὐδὲν πώποτε ὑμῖν ἐγένετο. Περὶ Συμμορ. p. 106.

† Les vertus mâles et courageuses, qui sont, comme dit Balsac, des courses que l'ame fait au-dela des devoirs communs. Helvetius de l'Esprit, iii. 22.

‡ This remark is well expressed by Demosthenes in his second

of the majesty of Rome and her vocation to empire, for ever working on the Roman character, that tempered its original iron into steel, and whetted its resistless edge. * It was the constant and unvarying subjection of every extraneous impulse to the authority of the law, that was the basis and preservative of the Lacedemonian virtue. The Athenian character, on the other hand, destitute of any permanent controul of particular principle or aim, (for self-esteem, which was its only unvarying feature cannot be regarded as a principle in the moral sense,) could at no period of its history be properly denominated a powerful or a virtuous character, at least a character which could give security for its own virtue or its own power. Even when the Athenians admired virtue, they had, to borrow an expression of Madame de Stael,* more enthusiasm than respect for it. Thus the Greeks used to say that the Athenians when good were eminently so, but that their goodness could not be counted on.† At

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Olynthiac. Ὡσπερ γαρ οικιας οιμαι και πλοιου τα κατωθεν ισχυροτατα ειναι δει, ουτω και των πραξεων τας αρχας και τας υποθεσεις αληθεις και δικαιας ειναι προσηκει, p. 13.

* Sur la Litterature, ch. ii.

† Και μοι νυν ἡ τις φαυη προσφιλης ὑμιν, το τι υπο πολλων λεγομενον, ὡς ὑσοι Αθηναιων εισιν αγαθοι διαφερουτως εισι τοιουτοι, δηπει αληθεστατα

all times it was the creature of impulse, controuled only by national vanity. The whole system of life was to them a theatre of entertainment, and they played at virtues and vices with all the gay, unthinking, uncalculating versatility of childhood,

> Sub nutrice puella velut si luderet infans,
> Quod cupide petiit, mature plena reliquit.*

The want of virtuous principle in the morals, strictly so called, of the Athenian people, is very striking. Except political expediency, there seems to have been no acknowledged ground of moral action whatever with the democracy. The whole culture, under which the Athenian character had been formed, was marvellously, we will not say immoral, but at least destitute of morality. Their constitution was rich in voluptuous sensibilities, the climate in voluptuous impulses; the inexperience of their primeval age allowed their moral perceptions to remain in almost infantine rudeness; their national poetry was singularly free from all traces of moral emotion; their education

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λιγιεθαι μονοι γαρ ανευ αναγκης, αυτοφυως, θειᾳ μοιρᾳ, αληθως και ου τι πλαστως υπο αγαθου. Plat. de Legg. i. tom. ii. p. 642.

* Hor. Ep. ii. 1. 99. See Note R.

merely cultivated, without in the slightest degree regulating, the power they had received from nature, nay, in some respects its details may be considered as directly tending to the corruption of morals.* Religion, indeed, such as it was, seems always to have possessed a powerful sway over the Athenian character. "Men of Athens," said the apostle of the Unknown God, ages after the vanity of idolatry was generally known, "I perceive that in all things ye are a pre-eminently demon-fearing race."† But it was not to be expected that virtue in its true meaning should find a sure foundation in the mythological religion, which was merely an apotheosis of humanity with all its vices and weaknesses about it, and which taught but very obscurely and confusedly the doctrine of a divine retribution.‡ The conscience, then, of the Athenian people, thus given up without reserve to be moulded by their politics, soon, like all their other powers, became the slave of

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* See Note S.

† Ἀνδρες Ἀθηναιοι, κατα παντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστερους ὑμας θεωρω, Act. Apost. xvii. 22. Consult Wakefield's illustrations of this passage in his Sylva Critica, v.; and see Note T.

‡ See Note. U.

their predominant nationality, and their religion itself bears the impress of the same controul. The temples of Minerva Panathenaica, and Minerva Polias, stood side by side on the summit of the Acropolis, while that of Jupiter Olympius, majestic as befitted the majesty of the god, was yet placed far off on the "subjected plain." The moral, indeed, as a great authoress has well remarked, was always viewed at Athens as part of the political.* From this inversion of the natural order of things, two very disastrous consequences ensued: first, a fatal imperfection in conceiving of the real extent of virtue; and secondly, a fatal laxity in conceiving of the constant obligation of the virtue which was known. On the one hand, the morals of personal purity and domestic duty, and indeed all virtue not directly bearing on the interests of the state, were unacknowledged and unknown. The male part of the population, in the discharge of their duty as citizens, being almost constantly together, without any intermixture of female society except that of the celebrated courtezans and female sophists, to whom, not less than

* Mad. de Stael sur la Literature, iv. The remark receives a striking illustration from the plan, and even the title of Plato's work Πολιτεια, η Περι Δικαιου.

to famous wits, Athens was native or hospitable, led to excesses of vicious indulgence, of which, fortunately, we can form no conception, and to a universality of personal impurity which has left, however unjustly, a shade of suspicion even on the fairest of her characters. The men being for the same reason compelled to spend most of their time abroad, in the midst of excitement and agitation, soon lost all relish for the calm pleasures and tranquil duties of domestic life. In regard to home, they were always querulous and dissatisfied when there, jealous and suspicious abroad.* More properly speaking, they had no homes; their houses were places to sleep in, and their wives upper-slaves to take care of them.† But the same cause which thus swept away the virtues of personal and domestic duty, operated yet further to make the obligation of the virtues which were retained lax and unstable. Thus affability, magnanimity, humanity, gratitude, and bravery, as general quali-

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* Aristoph. Lysistrat. Ecclesiaz. et Thesmophoriaz. passim.

† Εστι δε ότῳ ελασσονα διαλιγῃ ἡ τῃ γυναικι; Ει δε μη, ου πολλοις, ἐφη· Xenoph. Œconom. p. 481. Εγω μεν τοινυν ου παυ ενδον διατριβω, και γαρ αν τα τι εν τῃ οικιᾳ μου παυ και αυτη ἡ γυνη ἱκανη εστι διοικειν. Ibid. p. 487.

ties, too obviously contributed to advance the interests of the state, and the importance of individual citizens, to be overlooked or disowned by the Athenians as virtues. But then, there were occasions constantly occurring, when, in the particular circumstances, the interest of the democracy, or a man's own importance as a member of it, might appear to dictate a departure from the strict observance of the virtues in question, and in these cases the ruling passion was almost sure to carry the day over the particular duty. The Athenian was naturally affable, but he could be reserved and arrogant when his politics required it; the ascendancy which Pericles acquired by modest courtesy, he maintained by retiring haughtiness of manner.* The Athenians were, on the whole, a magnanimous people, and, if rightly managed, could be brought to sacrifice a great deal to honour; but they thought it too much to be uniformly in their heroics. "Nothing so expedient as the proposal of Themistocles, but nothing so unjust," said Aristides. "We reject it," shouted the assembly. "The project of the Samians is unjust," said the same Aristides, not long after, "but it

* Plut. in Pericl.

is expedient." The people approved the proposal.* Again the Athenians were, in their general character, humane, but under the impulse of political feeling, capable of savage cruelty: they who treated their slaves with a clemency unknown in any other age or country,† and who wept like children at the description of Diogeiton's oppression of his brother's orphan family,‡ tyrannized over their allies with a rod of iron,§ and, to expiate a trifling and unavoidable slight to the manes of a few Athenian mariners, sacrificed with remorseless butchery their own most meritorious citizens, the victors of Arginusæ and deliverers of their country.‖ Again, the Athenians were constitutionally the most grateful, politically the most ungrateful of nations: to a citizen who had deserved well of the republic, they, in the first impulse of spontaneous feeling, exaggerated beyond all bounds the expressions of

* Voyage d' Anacharsis, Introd. ii. 2.

† Vid Xenoph. de Rep. Athen. p. 403. Strabo, xiv. p. 635.

‡ Ὥστε μηδενα των παρεντων δυνασθαι φθογξασθαι, αλλα και δακρυοντας μηδεν ἡττον των πεπονθοτων αισχυνεσθαι σιωπη. Lysias c. Diogeit. p. 904. ed. Reisk.

§ Ὡς τυραννιδα ἐχοντι την αρχην. Thucyd. ii. 63.

‖ Xenoph. de Reb. Græc. i. p. 265.

their thankfulness; but the re-action was proportionally powerful, when second thoughts reminded them of danger to the democracy from exalting too highly a single man; and Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, Cimon, and almost all their distinguished characters thus learned successively, in exile or in prison, the fickleness of the popular breeze.* They were a nation enthusiastically brave, as they proved on many a well disputed day, from Marathon to fatal Chæronea; and yet among their bravest there was nothing of that chivalry of valour which scorns advantage, and leaves stratagem to cowards; the politician was never lost in the soldier, and one regrets that the triumph of Salamis should have been owing not less to the falsehood than to the prowess of Themistocles.† The definition, in short, of Athenian virtue, even in the times entitled the virtuous ages, was nothing else than the pervading nationality of character directing the moral conduct of the citizens by the standard of political expe-

* See the excellent chapter of Machiavel, "Per qual cagione i Romani furono meno ingrati a gli loro cittadini che gli Ateniesi. Discorsi sopra T. Livio, i. 28.

† See Note V.

diency. The effects of the principle of Machiavelism thus introduced into the very core and essence of virtue among the Athenians, are strongly perceptible even in the writings of their most enlightened moralists, and the conduct of their most upright citizens. Plato, in his republic, strongly prohibits falsehood, except, he adds, when it is for the good of the state,* and Aristides the Just, the Athenian paragon of rigid inflexible virtue, it is remarked by Theophrastus, more than once admitted and acted on the principle, that the advantage of the state may require the violation of truth and equity.† Almost all statesmanship, indeed, both of ancient and modern times, seems to have taken the principle for granted, that, in the complicated relations of politics what is morally wrong may often be politically right. But, as the political at Athens was the very standard of the moral, and

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* Τοις αρχουσι δη της πολεως, ειπερ τοις αλλοις, προσηκει ψευδεσθαι, η πολιτων ενεκα, επ' ωφελεια της πολεως· τοις δε αλλοις ουκ ἀκτεον του τοιουτου. Plato de Rep. iii. tom. ii. p. 414. See also De Legg. ii. tom. ii. p. 663.

† Καθ' ἑλου δ' ὁ Θεοφραστος φησι τον ανδρα τουτον, περι τα οικεια και τους πολιτας ακρως οντα δικαιον, εν τοις κοινοις πολλα πραξαι παρα την ὑποθεσιν της πατριδος, ὡς συχνης ἀδικιας διεμενην. Plut. in Aristid.

every individual was daily and directly engaged in the political administration, the influence of this dangerous principle could not be confined to politics, nor could the citizens, in their application of it, be expected to distinguish very accurately between their private and their public capacity. And so we find, that, in the natural course of things, after the influx of wealth and power into Athens made personal corruption a profitable speculation, the principles of self-interest became no less universal in their application to the transactions of private citizenship than to the exigencies of public affairs. When this once happened, the individual soon learned to prefer his own interest to that of the community; expediency in its grossest form was avowed as the principle of action; gain became virtue; and the Athenian was always calculating his profits whether he deliberated, or sat in judgment, or amused himself, or danced at the games and spectacles, or vanquished an enemy, or fled before one.*

* Xenoph. de Rep. Athen. p. 404. Hence the so frequent recurrence in the orators of allusions to the χρηματα στρατιωτικα, χρηματα θεωρικα, χρηματα ικκλησιαστικα, χρηματα δικαστικα. Hence too, the point of the remark of Isocrates (Areopagit. p. 144.) that

This we conceive to have been the great spring of what has been called the degeneracy of Athenian virtue, which followed the Persian war. The course of this corruption was, no doubt, materially accelerated by the tone of the prevailing literature, especially the Archilochian and Anacreontic schools of poetry, by the extensive commerce which Athens carried on with the eastern seats of luxury, by the exasperation and recklessness of mind which the misfortunes of the Peloponnesian war occasioned,* by the remarkable dissolution of principle which, the most accurately observant of historians assures us, was produced by the great plague of Athens,† and especially, if we may believe the uniform testimony of the ancients, by the corruption of the native music and dancing

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the old Athenians, unlike those of his own day, considered the administration of the commonwealth *ουκ ιμπορίαν, αλλα λειτουργίαν.* Cf. an admirable passage on this subject, Aristot. Pol. vi. 5. *Αμβλυνουσι δε αμα, και παλιν των αυτων δεονται ὁ τετρημενος γαρ εστι πιθος η τοιαυτη βουθυσια τοις απορους, κ. τ. λ.*

* See the profound chapters of Thucydides descriptive of these effects, iii. 82. 83.

† Thucyd. ii. 53. See this observation strikingly illustrated in a parallel case by Defoe in his account of the pestilence in Lon-

through the oriental importations of Phrynus and Timotheus.* The roots, however, of the mischief lay deeper, and were entwined, as we have seen, around the very foundations of the Athenian character. The national constitution having unfortunately, in a great measure, taken for granted the virtue of its administrators,† no check was found in the law to the rampant corruption. And at last, under the domination of Cleon,‡ matters came to that fearful degree of public and private profligacy which Aristophanes pourtrays with so vivid and unsparing a pencil;§ in which universal

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don, and well turned to account as a poetical subject in Wilson's City of the Plague, Act. i. Scene 4, and ii. 3.

* See Note W.

† Montesquieu, Esprit des Loix, iii. 3. "I do not hesitate to say (says Burke) that that state which lays its foundation in rare and heroic virtues will be sure to have its superstructure in the basest profligacy and corruption." Speech on Economical reform.

‡ There is a very lively picture of this pestilent demagogue and the principles of his administration in Aristoph. Eq. 45—80.

Ουτος καταγνους του γεροντος τους τροπους,
Ο βυρσοπαφλαγων, υποπτευων τον δεσποτην
Ηκαλλ', ιθωτιν', ικολακιν', εξηπατα,
Κοσκυλματιοις ακροισι, κ. τ. λ.

§ See a detailed description of this appalling state of things in Meiners Geschichte des Luxus der Athenienser, and Geschichte

and grasping avarice had taken the place of public spirit,* demagogues deceived,† and sycophants persecuted,‡ leaders were selected with no regard to qualifications,§ the reins of discipline were laid upon the neck of the public functionaries;‖ wealth and honour were the reward of the basest arts,¶ and

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der Wissenschaften, viii. 1. in Plato's Political Works, and in the Areopagitic and Social Orations of Isocrates. We shall content ourselves, however, with citing one or two of the many authorities for each of our statements which the works of Aristophanes contain.

* Ὡς μεγα δυνασθον πανταχου τω δυ ὀβολω.

Ran. 161.

† Ταραττε, και χορδιν ὁμου τα πραγματα
Ἁπαντα, και τον δημον αει προσκοιου,
Τριογλυκαινων χρηματιοις μαγειρικοις.
Ταδ' αλλα σοι προσεστι δημαγωγικα,
Φωνη μιαρα, γιγονας πακος, αγοραιος τι.
Εχεις ἁπαντα προς πολιτειαν ἁ δει.

Equit. 214, et seq.

‡ Ουκ εστι συκοφαντου δημματος.

Plut. 886.

§ See the two semichoruses in the Frogs beginning at line 686, and the prologue to the Eupolis of Demus, ap. Cumberland's Observer, No. 74.

‖ See the instances of public corruption referred to in the Frogs, 356—367.

¶ This is the principle of the whole fable of the Plutus.

even meanness was not deemed disgraceful, if cleverly carried off,* all natural respects seemed to be set aside,† good men were reduced to that transition state at which they doubt if virtue be worth preserving,‡ the old love of national glory and fervour of individual rivalry were converted into an insatiable thirst for war abroad,§ and a restless mania of litigiousness at home,‖ a love of reckless scepticism and ingenious trifling pervaded the public manners,¶ the itch for flattery, the rage for personality, the thirst of poignancy, and the passion for novelty made Demus a ready tool to bold bad men, at the same time that all along he more than half-

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* See the scene between the old woman and young man in the Plutus, 959 et seq.

† See the lamentations of the chorus in the Acharnians over the injuries which the old suffered from the young, 676 et seq.

‡ See the character of Chremylus in the Plutus, and particularly the introductory scene.

§ See Note X.

‖ See note Y.

¶ We may refer in illustration to the whole style and manner of Aristophanes, which form an ample commentary on the remark of Isocrates: Τους συκοφαντους δι, και σκωπτειν δυναμενους, συφυεις προσαγορευουσιν. Areopag. 149.

suspected how he was played upon,* while, to crown all, the education of the youth had passed into the hands of a set of frivolous, sceptical, voracious virtuosos in philosophy, whose profession was to teach the arts of profligacy as a science,† the Λογος Δικαιος of ancient times was not only supplanted but converted to sophistry by his enemy the Λογος Αδικος of the logodædalists,‡ and the grave sweet melody of the old Ionian music, which had trained the men of Marathon and Salamis, was so transformed by effeminate mixtures and theatrical graces, that Ionian in later times became the name of the most lascivious form of music and dance.§ Such is the fearful picture which that wonderful genius has drawn of the moral condition of the Athenian people in his own age; and while we are to recollect the definition which Aris-

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* See the dialogue between Demus and the Chorus in the Knights, 1150, et seq.

† Aristoph. Nub. 94, et passim. See Note Z.

‡ For the use of this expressive word, see Plat. Phædr. quoted by Cicero, Orat. 12.

§ Aristoph. Nub. 966, et seq. compared with Horat. Od. iii. 6. 5,

Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
Matura virgo.

totle gives of the ancient comedy, "that it is an imitation of nature's deformities,* that the works of Aristophanes are satires and caricatures," we must admit, at the same time, that if there be much exaggeration, there is also strong resemblance. Antipater praises Aristophanes for the equality which his comic vein maintained with the theme which he pourtrayed, and the propriety with which he distributed his laughter and his hatred;† and Plato sent a copy of his comedies to the tyrant Dionysius, not only as the best possible specimen of Athenian speech, but as the best possible picture of Athenian manners.‡ During this declension of national virtue, it is some relief to the darkness of the scene, to observe how strongly the Athenians felt their own degradation, and with what bitterness they blamed the men whom they supposed to be its authors. But the torrent of circumstances which we have described dragging down the Athenian

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* Ἡ δὲ Κωμῳδία μιμησις φαυλοτέρων ἐστι. Aristot. Poet. 5.

† Ω και δημον αρίστε, και Ἑλλαδος ηθιον ισα
Κωμικε, και στυγερας αξια και γιλασας.
Ap. Aristoph. Brunck. 1. xviii.

‡ Scaliger. Vit. Aristoph.

virtue, was too powerful to be resisted by a few instinctive, occasional struggles of feeling towards their former position, and the only individual who seems to have had genius enough to form a regular plan for checking the tide of corruption, and resolution enough to put it in practice, was the ever-memorable son of Sophroniscus. Socrates perished, but the fruits of his instructions survived; and coinciding both in time and in tendency with the severe chastisement which the spirit of arrogant and exclusive nationality received in the Peloponnesian war, and the introduction of what Harrington calls the rotatory, or partially representive system into the government by the result of Pisander's revolution * were followed by a considerable national improvement. At least the period succeeding the re-establishment of the democracy by Thrasybulus, is very favourably distinguished from those that preceded it by the apparent superiority of public virtue and private happiness.† It was,

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* Harrington's Prerogative of Popular Government, i. 12. Vid. Thucyd. viii. 97.

† *Μισρια γαρ η τι ις τους ολιγους και τους πολλους ξυγκρασις εγενετο* is the account which Thucydides gives (loc. cit.) of the effect produced by the establishment of the modified democracy: *κατα-*

however, a partial and temporary reformation. The great Pagan martyr fell; prosperity again shone upon the state; Lacedæmon and Thebes, her only rivals, sank under the consequences of mutually inflicted wounds; Athens again became the head of Greece, and, as of old, vain, overweening, and corrupt.* The former dark scene of public and private profligacy returned, though still from time to time illumined by flashes of heroic character, and all the better principles of human nature. Out of that corrupted mass there still emerged, in brilliant succession, such men as Thrasybulus, Timotheus, Chabrias, Demosthenes, and Phocion; and the confidence which the democracy, in its emergencies, reposed in their virtues, and the magnanimous deeds which she performed under their guidance, contribute not a

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σταστησαμενοι επολιτευοντο is Xenophon's short but emphatical description of the peace that its restoration by Thrasybulus created. Even Mitford (ειχον αισχυνη δε δυμῳ) is constrained to admit the fact of a great improvement, at this period, in the state of Athens. xxviii. 8.

* Hujus (Epaminondæ) morte etiam virtus Atheniensium intercidit; siquidem, amisso cui æmulari consueverant, in segnitiem torporemque resoluti, non, ut olim, in classem exercitusque, sed in dies festos apparatusque ludorum reditus publicos effundunt,

little to relieve the pervading darkness of her moral character. But each of these illustrious men, in his turn, left sufficient evidence of the uncongeniality of his character with the spirit of his age.* Favoured by the course of events, and cherished by such demagogues as Chares, the second Cleon, shameless corruption rotted the last bulwarks of Athenian virtue, and Philip found the silver spears, recommended by the oracle,† at least as powerful as the bristling iron of his own boasted phalanx; the ass stumbling onwards under the weight of Macedonian gold more irresistible than the whirlwind of his Thessalian cavalry.‡ Athens

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et cum actoribus nobilissimis poetisque theatra celebrant, frequentius scenam quam castra visentes, versificatoresque meliores quam duces laudantes; tum vectigal publicum, quo antea milites et remiges alebantur, cum urbano populo dividi cœptum. Justin. vi. 9.

* It is a curious circumstance noticed by Corn. Nepos in his life of Chabrias, that almost all the great Athenians of that age chose to live abroad; Conon in Cyprus, Iphicrates in Thrace, Timotheus in Lesbos, Chabrias in Egypt; any where rather than at Athens.

† Ἀργυρέαις λογχαισι μαχου, και παντα κρατησεις.

‡ Philip used to say that no city was impregnable which would only admit an ass loaded under his direction.

was enervated at home before she was enslaved at Chæronea.

We have thus considered, with as much detail as our limits allowed, the national character of the Athenians, and the causes of those peculiarities by which it was distinguished. Out of a system of civilizing influences, whose fundamental principle was that it permitted and encouraged a free, unbiassed, impartial developement of human nature, and a series of political events which raised the natural principle of self esteem into unusual force, we have seen a character emerge, which, unfolding itself on the one hand in the ardent culture of elegant art, and on the other in a fatal instability of moral principle, made Athens at once the most brilliant and the most corrupted state recorded in all history—the mother of so glorious a progeny of patriots, statesmen, warriors,

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——— Diffidit urbium
Portas vir Macedo, et subruit æmulos
Reges muneribus.
Horat. Od. iii. 16. 14.

See the magnificent contrast between the ancient integrity and the later corruption of the Athenians in the third Philippic of Demosthenes, p. 70.

poets, orators, historians, philosophers, artists—the nurse of so malignant a brood of demagogues, sycophants, sophists, quacks, courtezans, fools and knaves of every form and dimension. Were we called upon to embody our idea of the national character of Athens in an individual type, we should term her a national Aspasia; fascinating but dissolute like her,—the model of female beauty; the mirror of fashionable elegance, the mistress of pleasure to Alcibiades, the instructress of Pericles in eloquence, the muse of philosophy to Socrates, the paragon of Atticism to Athens.* Or we should style Demus a collective Alcibiades, that wonderful compound of grandeur, gracefulness, selfishness, and vice. Ever buoyant with the sense of superiority, and reigning over the admiration of men with an irresistible ascendant; endowed with a pliability of demeanour which could suit itself to every state of manners, and a flexibility of spirit which could attach itself to every object of pursuit; alternately attracted and repelled between the love of pleasure and the love of glory, and in either case with equal force; irresistible

* Plut. in Pericl. Plat. Menex. tom. ii. p. 235. Vie d'Aspasie, Choix des Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions, iii. 1. Par M. de Burigny.

equally when he wished to please or to destroy; he made vice itself almost amiable by the brilliance with which he invested it. Yet he felt for himself alone; the love he excited he could not experience; he courted admiration and scorned the admirers; love and admiration were claimed by him as rights, and laid on his heart no reciprocal obligation. He was the impersonation of fascinating ruin, pernicious loveliness. The shield whose lustre he delighted to soil in the bloodiest of the battle was made of gold and ivory, and its expressive device was, Love darting Thunder.*

The great advantage of such investigations as that in which we have been engaged, is the instruction they afford us in the science of human nature. In this instruction no character is so fertile as that of the Athenians. The sublime view which both reason and revelation suggest of the place they filled in the history of man, is that they were set up before the universe as represen-

* Ασπιδα ειχεν εκ χρυσου και ελεφαντος πεποιημενην, εφ' ης ην σημειον, Ερως κεραυνον ηγκυλισμενος, Athen. xii. p. 534. See a very lively description of Alcibiades by Wieland in his Agathon, xiv. 3. An eloquent exposition of his merits will be found in Isocrates De Bigis, and a fervid denouncement of his crimes in Andocides c. Alcibiad.

tations of human nature left to its own guidance,—of what it could do, and what it could become. And the scene which we have been surveying may very properly be called a history of the human understanding, and the human heart, in circumstances peculiarly favourable to afford their natural tendencies full scope and play. The Athenians reached the limit both of man's intellectual majesty and of his moral degradation; and both by their grandeur and their debasement have taught many an important lesson to posterity in all departments of knowledge and of action. "Tot nos præceptoribus, tot exemplis instruxit antiquitas, ut possit videri nulla sorte nascendi ætas felicior quam nostra, cui docendæ priores elaboraverunt."* And, though we may not suffer the brilliance of their talents to blind us to the defects of their morality, yet, as public benefactors of the race, the ancient Athenians are entitled to all the thanks which posterity can render. They sowed the seeds in the stormy and unsettled spring-time of the world, which are fast ripening to the harvest of a brighter season than earth has yet beheld. And it is meet that, for the benefits which have arisen

* Quinctil. xii. 11.

or shall yet arise from the progress of Freedom and Civilization, all generations of men should yield the homage of their gratitude to that glorious republic, which, within her wooden walls as in an ark, preserved them both from being overwhelmed, when the deluge of barbaric force swept over the dwellings of their youth. It is animating to behold the enlightened nations, with Britain at their head, awake to the generous impulse, and, by spreading the shield of their protection over the reviving liberties of Greece, repaying, as far as that may be, the debt which they owe to those illustrious men, the hundredth generation of whose children are now worthily asserting their claim to the heritage of their fathers. The ancient spirit is yet alive, and, though long fettered and still perverted by heavy oppression, has lightened forth in deeds of heroism, worthy the days of ancient renown. The Congress of Epidaurus, the first Amphictyonic Council of regenerated Greece, has sublimely declared "in the face of the universe, her anxious desire to regain the place she has lost by centuries of oppression, and to be numbered again among the enlightened nations of Europe, to whom," it is added, "she looks for sympathy and

support."* "Europe has heard the call, and answered with propitious thunder. May heaven prosper the omen, and speed the expected time of which young hope is fain to prophesy,—the time when the eye of Greece, so long extinguished, shall be rekindled in its ancient lustre; when the mother of arts, so long forsaken, shall see her far-scattered children hastening back to her embrace;—the time when, within Athenian walls, another Alcæus shall, in peaceful festival, wreathe the tyrannicidal sword with myrtle;† when another Æschylus, resting from victorious battle, shall sing the waters of Salamis, again consecrated by the triumph of the free; when a new Demosthenes shall swear by another Marathon; when Philosophy shall muse once more among the olive groves of Academe, and Art enshrine herself upon her own Acropolis; and when, more happy than

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* Blaquiere's History of the Greek Revolution.

† An allusion to the famous fragment attributed by many to Alcæus:

Εν μυρτου κλαδι ξιφος φορησω,
Ωσπιρ Αρμοδιος και Αριστογειτων,
Οτε τον τυραννον κτανιτην
Ισονομους θ' Αθηνας ιποιησατην.

of old, Liberty, no longer the confederate of license, shall maintain inviolable the harmony of her balanced powers, and Religion, purified from superstition, shall adore, in spirit and in truth, the now not "Unknown God!"

NOTES.

NOTES.

Note A, Page 1.

The words of Pliny are the following: "Pinxit et Demon Atheniensium argumento quoque ingenioso; *volebat* namque varium, iracundum, injustum, inconstantem; eundem inexorabilem, clementem, misericordem, excelsum, gloriosum, humilem, ferocem, fugacemque, et omnia pariter ostendere. Pliny, (H. N. xxxv.) De Piles, (Cours de Peinture, 75.) and Wieland, (Aristipp. Werke B. xxviii. pp. 270—276.) though they vary in the details, yet agree in the principle of supposing this portraiture of Demus to have been effected by an allegorical picture of various groupes. This hypothesis, however, has obviously been adopted in order to diminish the difficulties of the attempt, and is opposed, in our humble opinion, to the whole spirit

of the description, which naturally leads us to suppose that Parrhasius, whether he succeeded or not, at least intended to embody all the varied expressions which Pliny describes, in a single form. With regard to the success of the undertaking, opinions have also varied. Mr. Campbell, in the third of his interesting and beautiful Letters to the Students of the University of Glasgow, observes, that Parrhasius was generally supposed to have eminently succeeded in his arduous attempt. The word "volebat," however, in Pliny's account, seems to hint the contrary not very ambiguously, and to justify the terms in which we have spoken to this point in the Essay.

Note B, Page 5.

In regard to the identity of Ion and Javan, the circumstances of probability have been generally stated in the Essay. They are more minutely detailed in Bochart, Phaleg, iii. 3. Goguet de l'Origine des Loix, vol. i. p. 128. Ed. 1re. It were unfair, however, to conceal that there are some circumstances connected with this tradition, particularly the chronology assigned to the facts, which are not consistent with the exposition in the text. In Jodrell's Notes on the Ion of Euripides, the reader will find these difficulties minutely investigated, and in-

geniously explained. Generally speaking, we may say that, in reference to events of such obscurity and antiquity, chronological difficulties are least of all to be regarded, and the obvious confusion in the one person of Deucalion, of two individuals, far separated in time, and distinct in history, (one the survivor of the universal deluge, the other a prince of Thessaly, in whose time, perhaps, the great basin formed by the Thessalian hills was overflowed,) entitle us to draw the same inference in regard to his near descendant.' Whatever may be thought of this curious coincidence of names, it is certain, at least, from Sacred History, that the Greeks were the descendants of Javan; (See Shuckford's Connections, Book iii.) and it is in allusion to this origin of the Hellenic Tribes that Milton, whose learning was as accurate as his genius was sublime, in referring to the Greek mythology, speaks of

> The *Ionian* gods, of *Javan's* issue.
>
> Milton. Par. Lost, i. 508.

Note C, Page 7.

Though the denomination of Ionians was afterwards appropriated to the Colonies on the Asiatic shore of the Ægean, there is no doubt that the Athenians were the original bearers of the name, as well as the fountain

of the race. When Homer, as quoted by Strabo, (p. 392.) says Ενθαδε Βοιωτοι και Ιαονες, he obviously means by the latter the Athenians. The pillar erected by Theseus on the Isthmus, had for its legend on one side, "This is not Peloponnesus but Ionia," and on the other, "This is not Ionia but Peloponnesus." (Plut in Thes.) Herodotus speaks of the Κειοι, εθνος εον Ιωνικον απο Αθηναιων and the Ναξιοι, Ιωνες απ' Αθηνεων γεγονοτες. (Herod. viii. 46.) Το παλαιον, Strabo says distinctly, οι αυτοι ησαν Ιωνες και Αθηναιοι. (Lib. xiv. p. 679.)

Note D, Page 8.

The fact of the superiority of the Ionian to the other races of Greeks in flexibility and capacity of refinement, is well illustrated in the distinct characters of the dialects spoken by the different tribes; the Ionian being remarkable for suavity, and the Attic for elaborate harmony, while the Doric (and the Æolic is still more liable to the charge) is well described by Bentley, as "coarse and rustic, and always clouded with some obscurity," Εχουσης τι και ασαφες, says Porphyry, της Δωριδος διαλεκτου. (Epist. of Phalaris, p. 317.)

Note E, Page 9.

The number of Athenian citizens seems to have continued almost stationary between twenty and thirty thousand for a long course of years. Herodotus (v. 97.) speaks of 30,000 at the commencement of the Persian war, before the separation of citizens and metics. The poll of citizens under Pericles, mentioned by Plutarch, rated them at 14,040, obviously omitting the strangers who were denizened in Athens, and who contributed no inconsiderable share both to its literary and political strength. The estimate which Aristophanes gives, including the metics, (Ecclesiaz. 1132) is again the old number of 30,000. The last census of the Athenian population which was taken under Demetrius Phalereus (Athen. p. 272.) reckons the number of citizens 21,000, and that of metics 10,000, being an addition of only one thousand to the number of citizens in the course of the whole history of the independent commonwealth. The aversion of the Athenians to any great increase of population seems to have been shared by all the Grecian states, which made it an avowed object to keep the number of citizens within bounds; either from jealousy of their own prerogatives, or from an anticipation of Mr. Malthus's principles. Plato seems to hint the latter when he describes his Utopian citizens, as Ουχ ὑπερ ου-

σιαν ποιουμενοι παιδας, ευλαβουμενοι η πενιαν η πολεμον. (Plat. de Rep. II. tom. ii. p. 372.) The Athenians had recourse to various expedients in order to avert any great increase of population. In the early ages they used to dispose of their superfluous population in colonies; thus it was when the Ionians of Peloponnesus were suddenly thrown back upon the parent city by the conquests of the Heraclidæ, that they laid the foundations of their principal colonies in Asia and the Islands. (Thucyd. i. 2.) In later times they hired out their citizens as soldiers to foreign powers, and had recourse to the yet more questionable policy of publicly sanctioning licentiousness, and, there is reason to fear, extensively practising infanticide.

Note F, Page 13.

The ancient Greeks, in general, had deeply, and not without reason, imbibed a persuasion that their country was one peculiarly favourable to the developement of human nature. (Aristot. Pol. viii. 7. Isocr. Paneg. p. 44.) The climate of Attica is much more moderate, equable, and healthy, than that of most other parts of Greece, the air being generally clear, dry, and temperate, and less exposed to extremes of heat, cold, or moisture. The temperature of Athens seldom ex-

ceeds 90°, and as seldom sinks to the freezing point. Του δε της πασης Αττικης αερος ουτως εχοντος, αριστος και καθαρωτατος εστιν ὁ της πολεως ὑπερεχων. Aristid. Panath. p. 88. The soil is light, calcareous, and arid. The plain of Athens is, therefore, very destitute of large wood, (See William's Views in Greece) but abounds in the fig, the olive, the vine, and the choicest flowering shrubs. (Article on Modern Greece, in Quarterly Review, July 1820.) Its internal riches in mines of silver and marble, more than made up for its external comparative sterility. The silver of Laurium was the principal source of the Athenian revenue. (Xenoph. de Provent. p. 539.) And the marble of Pentelicus, the "Hymettiæ trabes," of Horace, formed the most important material of Athenian art. One circumstance, mentioned by Athenæus, in connection with the soil of Attica, is peculiarly deserving of remark, as contributing, perhaps, more than any other merely physical circumstance to the health, both of body and mind; the extreme purity of its water, though modern travellers describe the supply as scanty. (Dodwell, vol. ii. c. 1.)

Οἱα δη χωρα φερει
Διαφεροντα πασης, Ιππονικε, της οικουμενης,
Το μελι, τους κρεους, τα συκα,
Βοσκημαθ', ερια, μυρτα,
Θυμαθα, τυρους, ὑδωρ, διαφερον ὡς τι και
Γνοιην αν ευθυς Αττικον πινων ὑδωρ.

Antiphanes, ap Athen. ii. p. 43.

All Grecian travellers vie with each other in describing the power of Greek and especially Athenian scenery over the thoughts and feelings. To quote a single example or two:

"The mixture of the romantic with the rich," says Sylvester Douglas, "and the singularly picturesque form of all its mountains, do not allow us to wonder that even Virgil should generally desert his native Italy for the landscape of Greece. Whoever has viewed it in the tints of a Mediterranean spring, will agree with me in attributing much of the Grecian genius to scenery and climate."

"The character of the landscape round the city," says Dr Holland, "is very peculiar. There is a certain simplicity of outline and colouring, combined with the magnificence of form and extent which contributes much to this particular effect. It cannot be called a rich scenery, but one of its features is a sort of repose which may be derived from the form of the hills, from their slopes into the plain, and from the termination of this plain in the placid surface of the gulf of Salamis; above all, perhaps, from the resting point which the eye finds in the height of the Acropolis. Here, if anywhere, there is a certain "genius loci" which gives its character and colouring to the whole, and renders the scenery of the place something which is ever *unique* to the eye and the recollection."

We need not observe how perfectly this character of Athenian scenery corresponds to that of Athenian art, and how strongly this proves a connection between the climate and the character of the people. On the whole, we shall be safe, perhaps, in expressing our conclusion on the long-disputed question of the influence of climate in the cautious words of Filangieri, " Il clima può influire sul fisico e sul morale degli uomini, come causa concorrente, ma mai come causa assoluta."

Note G, Page 19.

The origin of the Greek mythology is one of those questions, of which there are so many connected with ancient literature, that have been discussed more as exercises of ingenuity in the synthesis of historical facts, than with an honest view to the discovery of truth, by tracing them to their principles in human nature.

It does appear to us that the general view given in the body of the Essay, which is substantially that of Hume in his Essay on the Natural History of Religion, and of Gibbon in his Essai sur l'Etude de la Literature, is the most obviously true, because it is the least obviously ingenious; it refers only to the every-day facts and principles of the human mind. The ultimate ori-

gin of the Greek mythology and the whole of Greek civilization, in India or Egypt, (which of these two ancient empires ought to have the priority remains yet to be determined,) is, from ancient testimonies, as well as from the remarkable affinity existing between the Oriental and the Greek superstition, beyond all controversy. Herodotus (ii. 52.) tells us, that before the arrival of the Egyptian mythology in Greece, the natives worshipped gods without names, and hence we may almost certainly infer, without personality, something like the vague conceptions of the object of worship which the American savages have formed. The influx of Eastern mythology along with the early settlers gave form and body to these conceptions, obviously not so distinct as to preclude, but only palpable enough to stimulate the exercise of Grecian imagination, which, during the long poetic age of Greece, had abundant leisure, according to those natural tendencies of mind described in the Essay, to construct the mythologic scheme.

This theory allows full operation to both the less general explanations which have been given by authors who discuss this subject, one party of whom maintains it to be solely a system of intentional allegory, while others consider it merely as a system of corrupted history. The allegorical scheme is defended by Dionysius Halicarnassius, (Antiq. Rom. ii.) Plutarch, (ap. Euseb. Præp. Evangel.

iii. 2.) Porphyry, the Stoics, the Alexandrian Platonists, the mystical Fathers, Basnage, Bryant, and Gebelin: in addition to whom the last-mentioned author claims with great assurance, 'Lord Bacon, on the ground of that illustrious philosopher's having occasionally amused himself with turning the mythological fables into allegories; though in his great work on the Advancement of Learning, he has expressly declared his opinion that, in general, the exposition is later than the parable. On the other hand, the purely historical scheme, which supposes all the gods to be merely deified men, and which was first propounded by Ephemerus the Messenian, is supported by Diodorus, Eusebius, and most of the writers, both Pagan and Christian, under the Roman empire, and in modern times by Le Clerc, Banier, and, in a great measure, by Warburton. Nothing can be plainer from hearing both sides in this controversy, than that neither can be exclusively right; and that some more general system is necessary that shall allow imagination, stimulated by all desires and curiosities, its full sweep in the creation of the Greek mythology, before we can find an explanation adequate to the phenomenon; a conclusion which is still more certainly verified from the imaginative air which the whole system wears, (a thing to be felt and not to be reasoned of,) than it can be by any particular argumentation.

The truth is, that as the Greek mythology is confessedly the creation of poets, so it is better interpreted by poets than by antiquaries. Among our own bards none seems to have seized its spirit more perfectly, or explained its origin with a truer sense of its natural history than Wordsworth in the famous passage of the Excursion, beginning with " In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman," &c. But instead of quoting at length that noble paragraph, we shall rather take the opportunity of attempting a feeble translation of a stanza or two from a most exquisite though somewhat heathenish poem of Schiller's addressed to the gods of Greece, which places the subject in a similar point of light, and beautifully embellishes the sentiments expressed in the Essay.

When o'er the form of naked truth
The muse had spread her magic veil,
Creation throbbed with life and youth,
And feeling warmed the insensible.
Then nature, formed for Love's embrace,
The earth in brighter glory trod;
All was enchanted ground, each trace
The footstep of a God.

But nature now, undeified,
Unweeting of the joys she gives,
Unconscious of her former pride,
And of the soul that in her lives,

Regardless of her maker's praise,
And dead to human sympathy,
Like a dull pendulum, obeys
The law of gravity.

Your gay religions knew no sadness,
They banished each austere emotion,
What bosom could but throb with gladness,
When gladness was the best devotion?
Whate'er was sacred then was fair;
No pleasure feared the eye of God;
Where roamed the blushing Muses, where
The Graces still abode.

Your temples smiled like palace-halls,
And there ye held your dazzling court
On many-wreathed festivals,
'Midst thundering cars and hero-sport;
And oft the sweet soul-breathing round
Of dance begirt your altars fair;
Your brows with bright love-garlands bound,
With wreaths your dewy hair.

Die Gotter Griechenlands, Gedichte i. 177.

Note H, Page 87.

The number of slaves in Athens was enormous. Athenæus (vi. p. 272.) states those enrolled at the census under Demetrius Phalereus at 400,000. Some authors, particularly Mr. Hume in his ingenious Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations, startled at the largeness of the estimate, have endeavoured to throw discredit either on the purity of the text in Athenæus, or on the correctness of his information. But no positive evidence has been produced to warrant either the one suspicion or the other. The only foundation on which the doubts that have been expressed are built is the apparent excess of the number itself. It is to be observed, however, that Mr. Hume has greatly exaggerated this difficulty, by supposing that Athenæus in his estimate refers only to full-grown male slaves, who on a reasonable calculation may be reckoned at a fourth part of the whole slave population, thus making the total number of slaves in Attica 1,600,000, a number which all will allow to be incredible. But this mode of calculation is altogether gratuitous. Mr. Hume indeed founds it on the circumstance that his author in giving the other results of the census, the number of the citizens, for example, certainly refers to the number of adult males. But it is by no means inconceivable, that Athe-

næus should have varied the principle of his estimate in regard to two such different classes of persons as the citizens and the slaves of Athens, nor would it be difficult to defend his strict accuracy in doing so. For it is quite plain that, in stating only the adult males of the native free population of Attica as *citizens*, he spoke what was literally true; they alone enjoying the privileges which constitute citizenship. Nor is it less so that, in giving the amount of the whole servile population under the name of slaves, he was also literally correct; as they all, whatever differences might exist among them of age or sex, were equally born into that condition which constitutes slavery. Taking the estimate of Athenæus, then, as of unquestionable authority, we reckon the number of slaves in Athens at 400,000, that is, twenty times the number of the citizens, and more than sufficient for the discharge of all the menial and mechanic arts. It is to the exemption which the citizens thus enjoyed from the plebeian necessities of life, that some authors have attributed the generous and elevated temper which at one period characterized the democracy; and it was this at any rate which set them free from those trammels of professionality by which the freedom of character is in modern times cribbed and confined. The Athenians were always duly grateful to their slave population for the advantages they contributed to the state. The mildness and equi-

ty (if we may use that word in regard to slavery in any circumstances) of their slave-system was in truth one of the fairest distinctions of their polity. Ουτε παραξαι εξεστιν αυτοθι, says Xenophon, (De Rep. Athen. p. 403.) ρηγορίαν και τοις δουλοις προς τους ελευθερους εποιησαμεν—εισι πλουσιοι δουλοι. κ. τ. λ. British slave-holders have much to learn from Athens.

Note I, Page 51.

The Athenian government, in its final form, was literally a despotism, according to the profound and witty saying of Aristotle: Εναντιαι δ'αι πολιτειαι Δημος μεν Τυραννιδι, καθ' Ησιοδον "Ως κεραμει κεραμευς" και γαρ ἡ Δημοκρατια ἡ τελευταια Τυραννις εστι. (Pol. v. 10.) An observation much sounder than that of Dr. Ferguson, when he remarks that perfect democracy and despotism appear to be the opposite extremes. (Progress of Society i. 10.) Although, however, hints of the great political principle on which the statement is founded occur more than once both in Plato and Aristotle, yet it does not appear to have been distinctly perceived by writers on government till the time of Montesquieu, and even by him it is stated with considerable obscurity. The principle is this: that the *forma regiminis*, the arrange-

ment of the powers of government, is a distinct consideration from the *forma imperii*, the selection of the functionaries of government; and that in every political constitution the first point in the essence of the government, and the choice of the governors is, though important, secondary. The essential distinction of a political constitution is, whether it be limited or unlimited; or, in other words, whether the legislative and executive powers be divided or united. A subordinate, though not unimportant one, is whether the sovereignty be exercised by one, by several, or by all. According as the powers are divided or combined, mutually checked or universally uncontrolled, the government, according to the nomenclature of Kant, which seems liable to no objection but its novelty (Heeren's Ideen, vol. i. App.), is called republican or despotical. According as the government is administered by an individual, by a class, or by the whole body of citizens, it is called autocracy, aristocracy, or democracy. According as a constitution is despotical or republican, it annihilates or secures the freedom which is called *personal liberty*, that is, every citizen's enjoyment of rights, independent of arbitrary will. According as it is autocratical, aristocratical, or democratical, it limits or enlarges that which is called *political liberty*, that is, the share which individuals possess in carrying on the government.

Now, what we wish to remark is this, that the Athenian government, while it conferred on the citizens a degree of *political* liberty which was never elsewhere enjoyed under a civilized administration, afforded no protection whatever to their *personal* liberty, but left all individual rights at the mercy of the sovereign, in whom the powers of government were finally centered. The constitution which thus became despotical had been, as originally constituted by Solon, a beautiful specimen of republicanism, or the government of checks and balances. The equilibrium of these, however, seems to have been insecurely disposed by the legislator, in so far as he constituted the many the sovereign, and placed the checks upon the sovereignty in the few. For it is quite obvious that, when the supremacy both of constitutional and physical power is lodged, as in this case, in the same quarter, there will be there collected a concentration of force which, on the first collision, will shatter into fragments the whole system of petty restraints intended for its regulation. So at least it happened at Athens. By the innovations of Clisthenes, Aristides, Cimon, and Pericles, the checks of the constitution were gradually displaced and overthrown; the sovereignty of the people was left entirely uncontrolled, and the machine of government, let loose from its regulators, began to work with a rapidity and fury which, while it produced the most astonishing effects of

power, and made the neighbouring nations giddy to gaze upon its revolutions, soon wore out its own springs, and shook itself to ruin.

These are the views on which we have ventured to call the Athenian government *a despotism* in the strictest sense of term. This, its true character, we deem it of much importance always to bear in mind, in order to reduce to their proper value the advantages which the supporters of despotism have ever been so ready to derive to their own cause from the acknowledged defects of the Athenian constitution. This has always been a favourite topic of reference to Hobbes and the other patrons of a slavish theory of government, as a proof, from experience, of the ruinous tendencies of anti-despotical principles. Yet it turns out, after all, that the whole mischief is the result of their own lauded despotism. For despotic power is essentially the same thing in the hands of many as of one, only that while in both cases it extinguishes personal freedom, in the former it cherishes political liberty, and so gives an impulse to mind and life, out of which all the more brilliant, if not the more solid, effects of good government may be produced. For though all despotism is essentially bad, yet each of its three forms has a peculiar character. *Oligarchical*, that jealous and insolent domination, as it is styled by Burke, (Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents,) is the most arrogant

and cruel of the forms, as Aristotle, from the result of his extensive observations, allows, and as we see clearly exhibited in the history of the thirty tyrants of Athens, the Decemviri of Rome, the Senate of Venice, and the knots of conspirators who successively tyrannized over revolutionary France. *Autocratical*, again, is the most torpid and chilling form of despotic government, as the general stagnation of mind which we observe beneath the shadow of despotic thrones abundantly demonstrates; while *democratical* is, of all the three infinitely the most favourable both to virtue and to intellect, because it destroys only one-half of freedom while it makes the other half doubly strong, and so at the expense of the equilibrium still keeps up the action of the machine. These distinctions in the theory of government, appear to us important in themselves, and to be especially valuable in their application to Grecian history. The principal historian of Greece our country has produced too often overlooks them in his unmeasured condemnation of the Athenian constitution, and equally unmeasured eulogies on the rule of Philip and of Dionysius; and an inattentive observer of the pictures which he presents of popular despotism, is too apt to mistake the effects of the despotism for consequences of the popularity, and, in contrasted cases of monarchical despotism, to conceive of the advantages of the monarchy as if they were results of the despotism.

The one advice, indeed, which, might we presume to advise, we should suggest to the readers of Mitford (and among these, from the substantial merits of his work, must be comprized all honest students of antiquity), would be this—fairly to inquire how much of the effects, which he attributes to the Athenian government, resulted from its being popular, and how much is to be ascribed to its being despotical. We cannot doubt that this inquiry, honestly pursued, will lead to much sounder political conclusions, than the impressions which will be received from passively admitting the dicta of the Philippizing historian.

Note K, Page 52.

Those who desire full information in regard to the manufacturing and commercial prosperity of Athens, will find the subject discussed and illustrated at great length, by A. H. L. Heeren, Professor of History at Gottingen, in the 3d volume of his Ideen Uber die Politik, die Verkehr, und den Handel der Vornehmsten Volker der Alten Welt, a book that, judging by the two previous volumes which are all that we have seen, deserves to be known to all scholars as a work of the highest order in classical antiquities. One or two de-

tached facts, however, will be sufficient to verify what we have advanced in the Essay.

The extent to which the division of labour, the index of manufacturing industry, had been carried in Athens, is strikingly illustrated in the catalogue of professions there carried on, to be found in Aristoph. Plut. 160 et seq., and Plat. de Rep. II. tom. II. 370—373; both passages too long to be transcribed, though the latter especially is well worth reading for its simplicity and eloquence. According to a law of Solon (mentioned by Ulpian in his Scholia on the Midias of Demosthenes), the Athenians were forbidden to have more slaves than they could employ, which, considering the number of slaves in Athens, implies no trifling extent of industry and traffic. Lysias (c. Eratosthen. p. 395. Ed. Reisk.) mentions 120 slaves as belonging to his household. We are informed, that it was common for Athenian manufacturers to give employment to 50 slaves, and that the net produce of a single slave's labour, in such a case, was from 100 to 120 drachmas. (Demosth. Aphob. I. Æschin. in Timanth.) The principal manufactures which served for exportation, were arms, cloths, household furniture, and books, (Lysias ibid.) and especially the staple commodity of the country, oil, which in ancient times, before butter was known, was in universal use. In return for these and the produce of the Laurian silver mines, Athens seems to

have imported the produce of almost all regions of the earth, particularly corn from the coasts of the Black Sea. Ὅτι εν Σικελιᾳ ηδυ, η εν Ιταλιᾳ, η εν Κυπρῳ, η εν Αιγυπτῳ, η εν Λυδιᾳ, η εν τῳ Ποντῳ, η εν Πελοποννησῳ η αλλοθι που ταυτα παντα εις ἐν ηθροισθαι, τον τε πλουτον μονοι οἱοι τ' εισιν εχειν των Ἑλληνων και των Βαρβαρων. Xen. de Rep. Athen. p. 405. Εμποριον γαρ εν μεσῳ της Ἑλλαδος τον Πειραια κατεστησατο, τοσαυτην ὑπερβολην εχον, ὡστε ἁ παρα των αλλων ἐν παρ' ἑκαστων χαλεπον εστι λαβειν, ταυθ' ἁπαντα παρ' αυτης ῥαδιον ειναι πορισασθαι. Isocr. Paneg. p. 49. It is a very amusing list which Eubulus, as quoted by Athenæus (xiv. p. 640), gives of the vendible commodities of the Athenian forum :—

Εν τῳ γαρ αυτῳ πανθ' ὁμου πωλησιται,
Εν τ' Αθηναις· ουκ ακλητηρις βατρυς,
Γογγυλιδες, ακτιει, μηλα, μαρτυρες, ῥοδα,
Μισπιλα, χθρια, σχαδονες, ἐριβινθοι, δικαι,
Πυες, τυρια τι, μυρτα, κληρωτηρια.
Ὑακινθος, αρνες, κλιψυδραι, νομοι, γραφαι.

And, what is the surest of all tokens of a flourishing commerce, there was in Athens a money-system of considerable extent, and something that resembled a regular exchange. (Barthelemi, Voyage d'Anach. ch. LV.) What greatly contributed to the extension and fulness of commerce among the Athenians, was the vast number of flourishing colonies which they had

planted in Asia and the islands, and with which they kept up a constant intercourse, both of trade and of protection, so long as they held the empire of the seas; the Ionian colonies being then, as they are still, the richest, and most commercial towns of the East; and Miletus, which was one of them, being, next to Tyre, the first emporium of the world.

'It is in reference to the manufacturing genius of the Athenian people that the learned but fantastic Gebelin explains the fragment of Sanchoniathon, relating to Athens:—*και ὁ Κρονος δε, περιῶν την οικουμενην, Ἀθηνᾳ, τῃ ἑαυτου Θυγατρι, διδωσι της Αττικης την βασιλειαν.* 'Le Explication d'Allegorie. L'Attique, pays montagneux, et du sol ingrat et sterile, devint un pays d'artistes, de fabriquans, de cultivateurs d'oliviers, de vendeurs de l'huile—ces arts, bien differens de celui du labourage, n'exigeant qu'une vie sedentaire et interieure, se faisant non au dehors et aux ardeurs du soleil, mais au dedans, mais dans la menage, district de la femme, de la mere de famille, de la dame de logis, furent mis sous la protection d'une Dèesse."—Gebelin, Monde Primitif, I. 10.

Note L, Page 52.

In regard to the wealth of Athens, some conclusion may be formed from the splendour of her works, and the vastness of her armaments. Some more definite information may be had from the speech of Pericles on the public resources, delivered before the commencement of the Peloponnesian war (Thucyd. ii. 17); the treatise of Xenophon on the revenue; and the oration of Demosthenes on raising the supplies for the war with Philip. From the calculations of Gillies, in the introduction to his translation of Lysias and Isocrates, it would appear that the income of Athens, even in its least flourishing periods, may be estimated as equal in value to at least twenty-four millions of our money.

Note M, Page 84.

The assertions here made, in regard to the dislike of the free Athenians for philosophy, have been objected to by some, whose opinions the author is bound to hold in the highest respect. Yet, on re-considering the circumstances of the case, he does not

see sufficient reason for changing his views; and he cannot help regarding the startling effect which such statements have, as depending on a certain anachronism of feeling, investing the mere name of Athens with a portion of that philosophic glory which she acquired after the fall of her political greatness. It is enough to say, in vindication of the views taken in the Essay, that, in opposition to the striking facts which have been stated in proof of them, not a single circumstance can be referred to in the history of philosophy, which tends to show that the love of science had any root in the national character of the Athenians before the fall of the independent commonwealth. The only Grecian seminaries of philosophy which existed previously, were established in the colonies, as the very names of the Ionian and Italic schools sufficiently indicate; and we have seen the reception which the greatest teacher of the former experienced, when he attempted to transfer his school to Athens. The only public deeds of the free democracy in regard to philosophy, which history records, are the condemnation of individual philosophers, and the decree of Sophocles banishing philosophers in a body from the Athenian territory. These national acts seem decisive of the national spirit at the time to which our remarks apply. That we may not, however, appear to have hazarded an opinion, unsupported by high authorities any more than unfound-

ed on historical facts, we beg leave to quote the words of an author, who, if any man ever could pretend to be so, was familiar with all that learning which relates to the case before us, the Abbè Barthelemi: "Les connoissances de la philosophie germaient en silence dans les écoles établies en Sicile, et en Italie. Sous Pericles, les recherches philosophiques furent sevèrement proscrites par les Atheniens, et les philosophes osaient à peine confier leurs dogmes à des disciples fidèles. Proscrits, persecutès, bannis, ils apprirent que la veritè, pour être admise parmi les hommes, ne doit pas se presenter à visage decouvert, mais se glisser furtivement à la suite de l'erreur."

Note N, Page 89.

The fondness for flowers characteristic of the Greeks in general, and especially of the Athenians, displayed itself in many beautiful customs. The use of garlands was a part of many of their religious ceremonies. Ου γαρ με τυπτησεις, στεφανον εχοντα γε, says Carion to his master on returning from the shrine of Apollo. (Aristoph. Plut. 21.) Other examples are produced in Spanheim's note on the passage. (Ap. Collect. Græc. III.) Chaplets were a necessary part of their entertainments; they crowned their houses and their heads with flowers

on all occasions of rejoicing, and they offered them not seldom as gifts to the divinities.' Ροδα και θεοισι τερπνα. Anacreon. Od. V. So common, in fact, was the use of chaplets, that the occupation of garland-weaver (στεφανοπλοκος) was a separate profession in Athens, (Plin. H. N. xxxv. 24.) designating, not artists in those mimic flowers which grace the modern toilet with their stiff unfading bloom, but in the true genuine "nimium breves flores" of nature, with all their own inimitable delicacy and perfume. (Sir Thomas Browne's Miscellany Tracts, No. 2.) The liking for artificial perfumes seems to have been as characteristic of Athens as the love of natural fragrance. Thus Athenæus styles the Athenians φιλομυρον γενος; and when Antiphanes is describing where the various articles of luxury were to be found in greatest perfection, he recommends to the connoisseur to choose his perfumery from Athens:

Εξ Ηλιδος μαγειρος, εξ Αργους λιζης,
Φλιασιος οινος, εκ Κορινθου στεμματα,
Ιχθυς Σικυωνος, Αιγιου δ' αυλητριδες,
Τυρος Σικελικος, μυρον εξ Αθηνων, εγχελεις
Βοιωτιαι. Athen. i. 27.

The perfumers shops were situated round the forum along with those of the barbers &c. and like them

were open to the public. (Aristoph. Equit. 1375. Theophr. Charact. 11.) See the whole subject of garlands and perfumes discussed with great minuteness in the 15th book of Athenæus.

Note O, Page 89.

Τους Χαιρεφιλου υιεις Αθηναιους, ὁτι
Εισηγαγι ταριχος" πολιτας ανηγραψαν.
Alexis ap. Athen. iii. 119.

See several most amusing quotations on Gastronomy from the Comic Poets in the seventh book of Athenæus. It is plain, from the accounts we still possess, that the Athenians, though fond of the pleasures of the table, were delicate in their tastes; they were epicures, not gluttons:

Πινειν μεν αμμις (Β ιωτοι), και φαγειν μεν ανδρικοι,
Και καρτερησαι· τοι δ' Αθηναιοι λιγειν,
Και μικρα φαγιμεν.
Eubulus ap. Athen. x. p. 417.

Thus it is that the articles of cookery in which the Athenians excelled were chiefly of the more delicate and elegant kind, such as various sorts of bread, and

of confectionary, in the manufacture of which their Hymettian honey was of great use.

——————— Πλακουντα

Αινει Αθηναι γιγνημενον· ειδε μη, αν που
Αυτον ιχνης ιτεροθι, μελι ζητησον απειλων
Αττικον, ως τουτ' εστιν ο ποιει κεινον υβριστην.

Archestratus ap. Athen, iii. p. 101.

Πως γαρ αν τις ευγενης γενοιτο
Δυναιτ' αν εξελθειν ποτε τησδ' εκ στεγης,
Ορων μεν αρτους τουσδι λευκοσωματους
Ιτινον καταμπεχοντας εν πυκναις διεξοδοις,
Ορων δε μορφην κριβανοις ηλλαγμενους,
Μιμημα χειρος Αττικης.

Antiphanes ap. Athen. iii. p. 112.

Εγκεφαλον, τον δ' εις αγορας ποιουμενον αρτον,
Αι κλειναι παρεχουσι βροτοις καλλιστον Αθηναι.

Archestratus ap. Athen. iii. 112.

Plato too, speaks of the Attic bon-bons, as being very seductive, and banishes them along with Homer, and apparently with similar reluctance, from his republic. Ουκουν ψευδεις και Αττικων πεμματων τας δοκουσας ειναι ευπαθειας; αναγκη. Rep. iii. 404. The Athenians seem to have been as delicate with their wine, in respect of quality, though by no means in regard to quantity, as with the edible viands of the table: Αριστοφανης λεγει τον Αθηναιων δημον ουτε ποιηταις ηδεσθαι σκλη-

ξοις και αστεμφεσιν, ουτε πραμνιοις σκληροισιν οινοις, συναγουσι τας οφρυς και την κοιλιαν, αλλ' ανθοσμια, και πεπονι νεκταροσταγει. Athen. i. p. 30. These details will prove the admirable selectness of epithets which the most learned of poets employs in inviting a classic friend to a classic entertainment:

> What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
> Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
> To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
> Warble immortal notes.
>
> Milton's Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence.

Note P, Page 95.

No question of ancient literature has excited greater discussion than that which regards the theory of the ancient comedy. It appears a production so totally opposite to the whole system of antique taste, so licentious both in its materials and in its mode of treating them,—so daringly intrusive upon the most venerated and cherished of the popular feelings,—so utterly without restraint of literary taste, or moral feeling, or political regard,—that it has always stood out from the body of Grecian art, so severe and august in its general principles of taste, an inconsistency to be wondered at, not to be explained. It was

indeed long considered by critics, unaccustomed to investigate things to their principles, and habituated to pronounce on every subject according to their own internal standard of propriety, as a literary monster, not only to be left unexplained, but to be *primâ facie* condemned and despised. Such was the fashion of Voltaire and his conceited school, whose patriarch, in the plenitude of his ignorant infallibility, pronounced this character of Aristophanes: "Ce poete comique, qui n'est ni comique ni poete, n'aurait pas été admis parmi nous à donner ses farces à la foire St. Laurent."* By the labours of profounder critics, especially the Schlegels, the true theory of the old comedy is now somewhat better understood, and the splendid genius of its principal author better appreciated. The principle which they propound, as that on which the ancient comedy was constructed, is simply this: that it is a dramatic composition in which the metaphorical description of a subject is made real, and exhibited as embodied in actual fact.† This is undoubtedly the principle of the invention and plot of the ancient comedy, and with its aid all difficulties in re-

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* Dictionnaire Philosophique, voc. Athée, Atheisme.

† See Schlegel on the Drama, and Mitchell's Introductory Essay.

lation to this part of the subject can be satisfactorily solved.

But there still remains a question to be answered: "What were the circumstances which, among a people of delicate taste, gave currency to such an order of productions with all the absurdities which they involved; and especially with the freedoms which they took with whatever was in general most jealously guarded against violation? How was the old comedy allowed to insult with insolent mockery the gods, for speaking against whom, Anaxagoras and Socrates were condemned,—to rub down with the most poignant salt of satire the great beast, the sovereign people, which Pericles durst not approach but with the bait held out of savoury speech and festive banquets:

Τ'πογλυκαίνων ῥήμασιν μαγειρικοῖς?

Aristoph. Equit. 216.

This has not been accounted for; but what if the true explanation should be the very simple and intelligible one, that they were all intoxicated—poet and spectators?

We know that the dramas in question were acted only at the great festivals of Bacchus, when Plato tells us, that the whole city got unanimously drunk; and when, with all his moral hatred and eloquent denouncement of this degrading habit, he gives per-

mission to be so in honour of the god. (De Legg. ii. tom. II. pp. 653, 672, 673.) Nay, he particularly refers to the Comic Theatre as the place where the Bacchanalian intoxication was most unrestrained and public; for when he introduces the Lacedæmonian, who is one of the interlocutors in his dialogue on Laws, stating, that under the Spartan rule, no excuse could save a man overtaken by such a fault from condign punishment, he thus expresses himself: Και ουτ' αν Διονυσια προφασιν εχοντι αυτον λυσαιτο ὡσπερ εν αμαξαις ειδον ποτε παρ' ὑμιν εγω. (De Legg. i. tom. II. p. 637.) The information which Athenæus supplies in regard to this fact is very abundant and express. We quote a single sentence. Αθηναιοι τοις Διονυσιακοις αγωσι, τὸ μεν πρωτον ηριστηκοτες και πεπωκοτες εξαδιζον επι την θεαν· παρα δε τον αγωνα παντα οινος αυτοις ψυχοειτο· και τοις χοροις εισιουσιν ενεχεον πινειν και διηγωνισμενοις, ὁτ' εξεπορευοντο ενεχεον παλιν. Athen. xi. p. 464. The old name of Comedy, τρυγῳδια, "the song of the wine lees," seems to intimate distinctly its nature as a poem for drunk people; and the great poets of the ancient comedy, were generally distinguished for their wine-bibbing powers. Cratinus, whose last and most triumphant production bore the appropriate title of the Wine Flask; had a monument erected to his memory on account of his talents by the Athenians, who, with their own amusing absurdity, inscribed nothing upon

it except that he was a drunkard. Aristophanes was said among his contemporaries to have written his comedies under the inspiration of Bacchus, and he is described by Plato as one of the three survivors at his famous banquet, whom Apollodorus, on awaking next morning, found πινοντας εκ φιαλης μεγαλης επιδεξια. Conviv. tom. III. p. 223.

The old comedy, then, was really in its origin, and was probably during its whole duration, considered by a fiction of imagination, as a piece of drunken entertainment; and it is on this principle that we think the extraordinary phenomena which it presents, are to be explained; that we can account for the impunity with which, in the face of a tasteful, superstitious, tyrannic populace, it dared to violate all rules of criticism, to ridicule all objects of worship, to satirize all foibles of the despot. A circumstance which strongly confirms the view we have taken of the subject is, that in the beginning of the *Equites*, the play in which the poet ventures on the most dangerous enterprize he ever attempted, the portraiture of Demus himself, he introduces his characters professedly as intoxicated, as if to remind his hearers of the charter under which he presumed on so hazardous a task, "periculosæ plenum opus aleæ." (Equit. 85—125.) But if this be the true idea of the ancient comedy, then the value of any production of the sort, as a work of art, must be estimated by a stand-

ard entirely different from that according to which we judge of the productions of serious literature. All considerations of delicacy, morality, and reserve, are inapplicable, because they are disowned in the very abstract idea of the work which supposes all such considerations banished from the mind by the tyranny of Bacchus. That is the best comedy, on the old principle, which is, with the fullest overflow of genius, extravagant, with the greatest power of intellect and imagination, insane; and this is the standard by which we must judge the dramas of Aristophanes, as literary pieces.* Judged as works of art by this criterion, we cannot admire them too highly, while judged as pieces of morality by the standard of virtue, we cannot execrate them too deeply; and thus, while the Athenian comedy must ever remain a standing proof of the immorality of national character at Athens, it is no evidence whatever, as it has generally been thought, of the imperfection of their taste in art.

Viewed in another point of light, as a political engine, the ancient comedy was of great importance. It

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* See the distinction between the beauty of goodness and the beauty of art, explained with a good deal of mysticism, but with general truth and acuteness, by F. Schlegel, in his Kritik und Theorie, IV.

is observed by Aristotle in his Poetics, that the people of Megaris, a democratical state, claimed the invention of comedy. It was first introduced into Athens by Susarion, in the 49th Olympiad, shortly after the settlement of the Athenian constitution by Solon; and it was long, like the Ostracism, considered by the jealous people an important privilege of their birth-right as citizens. The account which Horace has given in his Epistle to the Pisoes, of the suppression of the old comedy, in which he describes it as a necessity imposed by the principles of good government, is a misrepresentation of the case altogether. A law was passed, indeed, in the archonship of Myrrichides, probably through the influence of Pericles, though it is by some ascribed to Socrates, restraining the liberty of the old comedy. But the statute could not be maintained in force for more than two years. The truth is, that the old comedy was put down, not by the prudence of a legitimate magistracy, but by the cowardice of the Thirty Tyrants. The old comedy fell with the independent democracy. (See Wieland's Note on Horace, Ep. ad Pison. 281.)

Note Q, Page 111.

Ἐπὶ τοῦ προσώπου τ' ἐστὶν Ἀττικὸν βλέπος.
Aristoph. Nub. 1177.*

This said Attic glance is described in the context, as consisting in an expression of countenance equivalent to the question τί λέγεις, with which the true Athenian knew how to check the presumption of loquacious strangers, who, perhaps, after having taken great pains to be brilliant in such company, and flattering themselves that they had succeeded in impressing their auditor with a high esteem of their powers, were suddenly struck dumb by the question, asked with a most provoking coolness and apparent innocence of comprehension: "What say you?" τοῦτο τοὐπιχώριον, τὸ, τί λέγεις σύ; Ibid. 1174, 5.

Note R, Page 129.

The note of Wieland on this passage of Horace is so beautiful, and so much to our purpose, that we are tempted to translate it.

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* So read the reference on p. 111, where it is printed by mistake, Aristoph. Plut.

" I consider," he says, " this description of the genius and taste of the Greeks for the liberal arts as one of the finest passages in all Horace. The Greeks were the first nation in the world that turned into amusement the whole system of social and mental activity, and, by making this amusement a national object, formed for themselves a national character, which made them, in comparison of other nations, what their own Aspasia or Alcibiades would have been wherever they had appeared. They were the first who, out of the most essential distinction of man above the other animals—language—were able to create an art, and that art the most powerful of all. Song, instrumental harmony, and dance, were with them combined in one music. To them alone the Goddess of Beauty, with the Graces, her inseparable playmates, revealed herself, and shed her own magic over all their works; grace was diffused over all they said and did; they alone found out the secret of blending the sublime with the beautiful, the useful with the agreeable. Their legislators were poets, their heroes sacrificed to the Muses, and their philosophers to the Graces. The most abstract conceptions of the human understanding acquired from the fancy of their poets, under the pencil of their painters and the hands of their sculptors, a beautiful life, and became lovely, heart-exalting images. Even religion, among most other nations so grim and

terrible, obtained among them a philanthropic form; the gods of other nations were hieroglyphical monsters, theirs were abstractions of perfect humanity. Their mysteries were, as Cicero says, a benefaction to the world; and in their secret darkness, where other nations were alarmed by a thousand spectres of superstition, they spread cheerfulness through life, and infused hope into death. In all this was expressed the serene, free, youthful spirit of the Greeks, which working with a sort of gay, capricious enthusiasm, drew them onwards from one beautiful amusement to another. All their fine arts had a certain point of time when they were passionately pursued, loved, and rewarded: even the inconstancy of their character proved for the advantage of art, as they never lingered long beside any single model of beauty, any single stage of art, any manner of a single master, but always desired what was more new if not more beautiful. But in this way their arts became at last only dolls with which the nation amused itself, which it now caressed, now threw aside, now sought again attired after another fashion.

Note S, Page 130.

The moral effects of the gymnastical part of Athenian education have been held in very different estima-

tion by different judges. "It tended forcibly," says Sylvester Douglas, "to correct the enervating influence of climate, and to raise in the elegant and the rich the desire of distinction at the expense of personal danger and pain." "The firm organization," says Gillies, "acquired by perpetual exercise, counteracted the fatal propensity to luxurious indulgence, too natural to that voluptuous climate." On the other hand, Cicero remarks, "Mihi quidem hæc in Græcorum gymnasiis natâ consuetudo videtur, in quibus isti liberi et concessi sunt amores; bene ergo Ennius: Flagitii principium est nudare inter cives corpora." Tusc. Quæst. iv. 33.

We believe both these statements may be true at once; for certainly never was there a stronger development either of physical energy or of physical licentiousness, than in the national character of the Athenians, the only nation which, clothed in purple, vanquished men clad in steel.

Note T, Page 130.

With regard to the religious feelings of the Athenians in the latter ages of the commonwealth, our information is very contradictory. On the one hand we find in the Comedies of Aristophanes scenes and de-

scriptions, which would seem to prove that the Athenians, as a nation, had entirely lost all feeling of respect for the ancient national religion. Such are the accounts of Carion's adventures in the temple of Æsculapius, the visit of Mercury to earth, related in the Plutus, and the whole fable of the *Birds*. And these living proofs of the contempt into which the mythology, at least, of the national religion had fallen, are accompanied with serious complaints of the actual decay of public devotion in the established worship of the State. (See Nubes, 607—626.)

Ὅταν θυσιν δεῃ στρεβλουτες και διηαξετι.

"Yet, on the other hand, we find from the whole of the Athenian history, that the city of Athens is justly described by the Apostle as wholly given to idolatry. Not to speak again of the many martyrs to this popular principle whom we might enumerate among the fathers of philosophy at Athens, the prevalence of sincere superstitious feeling among the Athenians is further proved by many striking circumstances of national manners, such as the rage for oracles and omens received by tradition from their fathers which at all periods pervaded the populace. Thus Dinarchus, c. Demosth. speaks probably in allusion to oracular books of τας απορρητους διαθηκας εν αις τα της πολεως σωτηρια κειται. Dinarch.

Reisk. p. 8.* The devoted cultivation of religious mysteries by which Attica was so distinguished, that initiation seems to have been regarded there somewhat in the light in which participation in the sacraments is considered in Catholic countries;

Δει γαρ μυηθηναι με περιν τεθνηκεναι.
Aristoph. Pax. 375.

and the ungovernable mania of indignation, resembling in all its circumstances the phrenzy produced by the pretended Popish plot in England, which the youthful frolic of Alcibiades in mutilating the Hermaic images excited. From all these facts, in opposition to which we have only the single circumstance of the profanity of the popular comedy, which appears to admit of sufficient explanation on a principle already stated, it seems certain that the feeling of religion, such as it was at Athens, continued to pervade the popular mind during the whole series of her history as an independent state. That the better informed classes (not to speak of the philosophers) disbelieved the poetic mythology is certain; one proof of which is the fact, that in all serious works of cultivated men in Athens, such as the works of the historians, particularly Herodotus, and the harangues of the orators, especially Demosthenes,

* Cf. Aristoph. Equit. 960—1100. Cic. de Divinat. i. 43. 54, &c.

we find an abstract principle constantly referred to, as governing the world, under the name sometimes of Θεος, sometimes of οἱ Θεοι, but in either case obviously denoting the general principle of Ruling Power, and not a being or beings possessed of the personality ascribed to the gods in the poetic mythology. Still the most enlightened of them all countenanced the popular religion in public, (Plato defends, and Socrates acted on the principle,) as an engine of government and police, a fact which sufficiently proves that its utter vanity was not then recognized, nor likely soon to be so by the body of the nation. If we may suppose the number of religious rites and festivals to be in any degree an index of the true spirit of the people, which lavished upon them so much of its time, its genius and its treasure, we shall find more than sufficient reason to believe in the sincere religious feeling of the Athenian nation. To the erection and embellishment of temples to the gods, by far the greater portion of Athenian art was consecrated. In festivals to their honour they consumed twice as many days as any other state in Greece, and their celebration of divine service was beyond all comparison in sumptuousness and splendour.

Παρθένου αμφιφορεύς,
Ελθωμεν λιταρας
Χθονι Παλλαδος, ευανδρου γας

Κικλοσσος οψομιναι πολυηρατον·
Ου σιβας ἀρρητων ἱερων, ινα
Μυστοδοκος δομος
Εν τιλεταις ἁγιαις αναδικνυται,
Ουρανιοις τι θειοις δωρημασα,
Ναοι δ' ὑψιρεφεις και αγαλματα,
Και προσοδοι μακαρων ἱερωνται,
Ευστεφανοι τι θεων
Θυσιαι, θαλιαι τε
Παντοδαπαισιν εν ὡραις·
Ηρι τ' επιερχομενω βρομια χαρις,
Ευκιλαδων τε χορων ιριθισματα,
Και Μουσα βαρυβρομος αυλων.

Aristoph. Nub. 298, et seq.

Nymphs of the rain,
Let us visit again
The land by Pallas loved, the home
Of noble men and all delights,
Filled with the awe of nameless rites,
For which full oft the mystic dome
Duly unfolds its hallowed portals;
And gifts are there to the Powers Divine,
And many a statue and lofty shrine,
And pomps for all the blessed immortals;
Banquet and wreathy sacrifice
Hallow each season as it flies,
And ever, at the voice of spring,
Bacchus his mirthful grace renews;
Sweet choirs in strife melodious sing,
And all the festive echoes ring
With thunders of the Scenic Muse.

Note U, Page 130.

On this subject, the origin and developement of the idea of rewards and punishments after death among the Greeks, there is a very interesting little dissertation by Professor Heeren, in the third volume of his Historical Works, of which the following is the substance:—In Homer's time, the ancients obviously had the idea of a future state, but they do not appear to have conceived of it as one of retribution. (Odyss. xi. xxiv. 100—200.) Personal enemies of the gods, such as Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, &c. (Odyss. xi. 575.) were supposed to suffer torments in that world, just as Prometheus and Atlas in this. Tartarus was conceived of as a deep abyss under the earth, where Saturn and the Titans were punished, (Iliad, viii. 477.) a place quite distinct from the kingdom of the dead. The personal favourites of the gods were understood to be either transported without dying to the Elysian fields, as Menelaus, (Odyss. iv. 561—570), or taken up directly to heaven, as Hercules, Ganymede, Tithonus. The vulgar ghosts lived together, without any apparent distinction in the kingdom of the dead, at the western extremity of the earth. Hesiod's views are somewhat more developed than Homer's. According to him, dead heroes inhabited a region of

separate happiness, known by the name of the Blessed Islands. (Εργ. v. 166.) Afterwards, not only heroes, but all great men, especially patriots, were supposed to be admitted there, as Harmodius and Aristogiton, in the well known fragment of Alcæus or Callistratus on the myrtle-wreathed sword. Æschylus approaches very near to the express doctrine of future punishments to the bad. (Eumen. 273, 335. Suppl. 421.) Finally, Pindar expresses the full doctrine of retribution, (Olymp. ii. 102, 148.) mixed with the cognate idea of metempsychosis.* After whom, the dogma of future retribution seems to have become a part of the popular creed, though, at the best, very uncertainly traced, and obscurely developed. So far Porfessor Heeren.

It would appear, from all the notices which we possess upon the subject, that the disclosure of this great doctrine constituted the revelation made to the initiated at the Eleusinian mysteries. Την τελετην, ἡς οἱ μετεχοντες, περι τε της του βιου τελευτης και του συμπαντος αιωνος, ἡδιους τας ελπιδας εχουσιν. Isocr. Paneg. p. 46. Of these mysteries, after all that has been written on the subject, we cannot but think that the sixth book of the Æneid is virtually a description. The fame which Gibbon's criticism has acquired as a complete refuta-

* See Fragm. preserved by Plato in Menon.

tion of Bishop Warburton's theory, appears to us to have resulted very much from his having had the last word; for no one, we think can, without prepossession, compare the Prelate with the Historian on this subject, without feeling that the preponderance of evidence is on the same side with that of learning. We have observed one striking presumption in favour of the Bishop's theory, which we do not recollect that he has noticed, in the Ranæ of Aristophanes. When Bacchus and Xanthias have descended to the infernal regions, and are crossing the Stygian lake, the latter remarks the breathings from the further bank of a highly mystical air, (μυστικωτατη αυρα, v. 316.) and, immediately on landing, they are received by a chorus of mystagogues, (χορος μυστων,) who attend them during their whole progress through the shades, by which it is evidently insinuated, that the Aristophanic picture of these regions, which is in principle the same as the Virgilian, was borrowed from the transactions of the Mysteries. It is striking, however, with what indistinctness the doctrine of equal retribution is developed even in the splendid painting of the Æneid; and how many,—for example, the shades of the unburied, of infants, of warriors,—are represented as having their destiny in the future world determined, not by "the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be bad," but by mere accidents in their

condition, over which they themselves had no controul. On the whole, therefore, we consider ourselves justified in asserting, that among the ancients generally, and among the Athenians in particular, the idea of a retribution to come was a very vague and unimpressive one, and too wavering to afford any solid support to virtue.

Note V, Page 135.

Bravery seems ever to have remained an esteemed and essential part of the Athenian character, even in its darkest ages. Cowardice in the field was always held a disgrace, when scarcely any other vileness was so esteemed, as we see in the whole works of Aristophanes and the Orators, especially that most poignant and sarcastic speech of Lysias against Theomnestus. To the brave who fell, the most lavish national honours were accorded; their bodies were entombed in public sepulchres; their eulogy was pronounced by Pericles or Demosthenes; their names were engraven on columns of brass or marble; their memory became a sacred thing to swear by. (Demosth. de Corona, Thucyd. ii. 35—45., Pausan. i. 32.) Thus it happened, that at all periods Athens abounded in great captains and a brilliant soldiery.

The character, however, of Athenian bravery was, in the latter ages of the free commonwealth, essentially corrupted by various causes. One circumstance, which contributed greatly to this degeneracy, was the practice which avarice or desire of enterprise prompted, and which was encouraged by the anti-population policy of the state, of the citizens hiring themselves out to serve whatever master would pay them best, and lead them into the most spirited field of action. Thus the celebrated expedition of Cyrus, and retreat of the Ten Thousand, while it is perhaps the most brilliant proof on record of the military talents of the Athenian leaders and Athenian soldiery, even at that corrupted era of the State, is also the most satisfactory evidence of the decline of the true military temper of honour and patriotism into the professional "miles gloriosus" spirit of craftsmen and hirelings. (Heeren's Historische Werke, III. p. 290.) Another circumstance, which Plato blames for converting the bravery of Athens into a spirit of calculation and stratagem, is the maritime system of warfare introduced by the policy of Pericles at the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, and which is thus described by Aristophanes:—

Την γην όταν νομισωσι την των πολιτων
Ειναι σφιτεραν, την δε σφετεραν των πολιτων,
Πορον δε τας ναυς, απορειαν δε τον πορον.

Ran. 1463.

Επι γαρ αν πλεονακις (says Plato, alluding to the tribute which the Athenians used to pay to Minos the first sovereign of the seas) επτα απολεσαι παιδας αυτοις συνηνεγκε, πριν αντι πεζων ὁπλιτων νομιμων, ναυτικους γενομενους εθισθηναι, πυκνα αποπηδωντας δρομικως εις τας ναυς, ταχυ παλιν αποχωρειν, και δοκειν μηδεν αισχρον ποιειν, μη τολμωντας αποθνησκειν, μενοντας επιφερομενων πολεμιων· αλλ' εικαιας αυτοις γενεσθαι προφασεις, και σφοδρα ἑτοιμας ὁπλα τε απολλυσι, και φευγουσι δη τινας ουκ αισχρας, ὡς φασι, φυγας· προς δε τουτοις, αι δια τα ναυτικα πολεων δυναμεις ἁμα σωτηριας, τιμας ου τῳ καλλιστῳ των πολεμικων αποδιδοασι· δια κυβερνητικης γαρ και πεντηκονταρχιας, και ερετικης παντοδαπων και ου πανυ σπουδαιων ανθρωπων γιγνομενης, τας τιμας ἑκαστοις ουκ αν δυναιτο ορθως αποδιδοναι τις· και τοι πως αν ετι πολιτεια γιγνοιτο ορθη, τουτου στερομενη; Plato de Legg. iv. tom. ii. pp. 706, 707.

There is a good deal that is striking in the point of view in which Plato considers the matter, and we find Aristophanes in accordance with it emphatically characterizing the Athenians as οικοι μεν λεοντες, εν μαχῃ δ' αλωπεκες. Pax. 674. But it were unjust to the Athenians to deny, that with all the deductions which may be made on such grounds, bravery—the bravery both of enthusiasm and resolution,—was a distinguishing part of their character, so long as they had a country to be brave for.

Note W, Page 138.

The influence which music exerted over ancient manners, at least was supposed by the ancients to exert, is one of the most peculiar circumstances in the ancient civilization. We have, to be sure, in our own literature, such anecdotes as that of Fletcher of Salton who was willing to let any one that pleased make the laws, so he might make the ballads of a country; and such poetic raptures as Shakspeare's:

The man that has not music in his soul, &c.

But the ancients seem really to have believed what we allow to pass merely as a rhetorical or poetical figure. Aristophanes frequently attributes the corruption of national manners to the alteration of the national music.

Λεξω τοινυν την αρχαιαν παιδειαν, ως διηκτο.

* * * * * * *

——— προμαθειν ασμ' ιδιδασκον, των μηδεν μη ξυνιχουτας,
Η Παλλαδα περσεπτολιν διωκειν, η, τηλικοσδι τι βαμμα,
Εντειναμενους την αρμονιαν, ην οι πατερες παρεδωκαν·
Ει δε τις αυτων βωμολοχευσαιτ', η καμψειεν τινα καμπην,

Οἵας εἰ νυν τας κατα Φρυνιν ταυτας τας δυσκολοκαμπτους,
Εστιρίζετο τυπτομενος πολλας, ὡς τας Μουσας αφανιζων.
* * * * * * *
——— ——— ταυτ' ἐστιν ἐκεινα
Ἐξ ὧν ἀνδρας Μαραθωνομαχους ἡ 'μη παιδιυσις ἐθρεψεν.

Nub. 961. et seq.

On the same grounds we find *musical* and *virtuous* used as parallel terms, and a lamentation uttered over the neglect of men so qualified in the state.

Ἡ δημαγωγια γαρ ου προς μουσικον
Ετ ἐστιν ἀνδρος, οὐδ' χρηστου τους τροπους.

Equit. 191.

One of the great charges, indeed, by which the Comedian justifies his incessant persecution of Euripides, is the share which the latter had taken in promoting the innovations introduced by Timotheus into the national music; and which, in connection with the effeminate softness and unprincipled casuistry of his tragedies, he affects to consider as forming part of a regular plan for the corruption of the national manners. But it is not merely the opinion of a licensed libertine of a poet that proves the importance attached by the ancients to music; Polybius, one of the most exactly inquisitive of all the ancient his-

torians, in the 20th and 21st chapters of his fourth book, carefully expounds the facts on which he founded his opinion of the legitimate importance to be attached to music, in opposition to a different sentiment which had been expressed by the great historian Ephorus: *Μουσικην γαρ, την γε αληθως μουσικην, παισιμεν ανθρωποις οφελος ασκειν.* A great part of the third book of Plato's Republic is occupied with the discussion of the same subject in a manner which sufficiently shews the opinion he had of its vital importance to the well-being of a people. *Ουδαμου γαρ κινουνται μουσικης τροποι ανευ πολιτικων νομων των μεγιστων, ὡς φησι τε Δαμων κἀγω πειθομαι.* Rep. iv. tom. ii. p. 424. "Assentior Platoni," says Cicero, "nihil tam facile in animos teneros atque molles influere quam varios canendi sonos, quorum dici vix potest quanta sit vis in utramque partem. Civitatum hoc multarum in Græcia interfuit, antiquum vocum servare modum; quarum mores, lapsi ad mollitiem, pariter sunt immutati cum cantibus, aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant," &c. (De Legg. ii. 15.) Quinctilian, in describing the influence of music, says: "Quæ nunc insanis effeminata atque impudicis modis fracta, non ex parte minima, si quid in nobis virilis roboris manebat excidit." i. 10. But it were endless to multiply authorities. Those which we have quoted are from the most sagacious men of all antiquity,

and it only remains, with the object we have in view, to ascertain what was really the operation of music as a cause on the national manners of Athens. The fact of the change in the character of the Ionian music simultaneously with the the change in the Athenian character is quite ascertained: Το Ιαστι γενος ἁρμονιας ουτε αχθηρον ουτε λιαρον εστι, αλλ' αυστηρον, και σκληρον, αγκον δ' εχον ουκ αγεννη· τα δε νυν Ιωνων ηθη τρυφερωτερα και πολυ παραλλαττοντα της ἁρμονιας ηθος. Athen. xiv. 625. From many passages of Aristophanes it is obvious that the corruption complained of was taking place in his times. Now it cannot be doubted, that the corruption of music and the corruption of manners must have acted and re-acted in promoting each other; but it seems as plain upon the other hand, that the ancient authors, who make the former a primary cause of the latter, have disarranged the order of events. Music must have had a more powerful effect upon the Athenian character than we can easily conceive, in consequence partly of their distinguishing fineness and susceptibility of ear, partly of the musical training which formed so great a part of their education, and most of all from the extent of what they understood by the term *music*, which comprehended all the literature connected with harmony (as was the case more or less with all literature in Athens), and so placed under the guardianship of the *Muses*. Thus Plato, Rep. ii. tom. ii. p. 376. χαλεπον εστι ευρειν βελτιω

παιδειαν της υπο του πολλου χρονου ευρημενης· εστι δε που, ἡ μεν επι σωμασι γυμνασστικη, ἡ δ' επι ψυχῃ μουσικη.· Μουσικης δ' ειπων, ἡθης λογους, η ου; Εγωγε. Accordingly in the third and seventh books of the same work we find mythology, poetry, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, harmony, and dialectics, described at length, as parts of musical education. In this large sense of the word, it is not difficult to go along with the statements and reasonings of the ancients on the influence of national music on national character: for that is the nearest resemblance which existed in ancient times to the influence of *the press* in modern. But when the word is taken in its more limited sense, and the same statements are made with regard to it as when it is used in the widest signification, we must consider it as a mistake of the effect, or rather of the concomitant for the cause. No error in reasoning is more easily committed, than when we observe two definite effects resulting simultaneously from one set of circumstances, to understand the one for the cause of the other. The true account of the matter seems to be that given by Cicero, when, after mentioning that some considered the depravation of Athenian music to be the cause of the corruption of Athenian manners, he adds, insinuating that the sentiment is his own: "Aut cum severitas eorum ob alia vitia cecidisset, tum fuit in auribus animisque mutatis etiam huic mutationi

locus." De Legg. ii. 15. A licentious music, then, like every other vicious habit, began to operate in promoting that corruption in which itself had originated, and, as such a secondary agent, deserves to have a place in the enumeration of the causes which produced the degeneracy of Athenian virtue.

Note X, Page 141.

The love of war was so deeply interwoven with the restlessness of the Athenian character, that they seem to have been of Hobbes's opinion, that warfare is the natural state of man. (Mitford, xv. 7.) Even the patriots, who entertained the widest views with regard to the true interests of the State, appear never to have supposed its extinction possible, but made it their object merely to have it directed into another channel; to turn against the Barbarians, the natural enemies of Greece (if we may recal a now justly exploded idea), that martial spirit which was rending the vitals of Greece itself. Thus Aristophanes, in a play whose principal object was to satirize the readiness in going forth to strive with each other, so fatally characteristic of the Greek tribes, both in ancient and in modern times:—

Λοιδορησαι βουλομαι
Κοινη δικαιως, ει μιας τις χερνιβος
Βωμους περιῤῥαινοντες, ὡσπερ ξυγγενεις
Ολυμπιασιν, εν Πυλαις, Πυθοι——
Εχθρων παροντων βαρβαρων, στρατευμασιν
Ἑλληνας ανδρας και πολεις απολλυτε.

Lysistr. 1127, et seq.

The same views are largely and eloquently insisted on in the 5th book of Plato's Republic, and in the latter part of the Panegyrical and Panathenaical Orations of Isocrates, at too great length to be at present quoted. So deeply convinced was Aristophanes, as sound a politician as he was an inimitable poet, of the ruinous effects of the passion for mutual war on the character of his countrymen, that he has devoted two other plays, besides the Lysistrate, to expose and denounce it, the Pax, and the Acharnenses, his first acknowledged production. From each of these we quote a passage of remarkable graphic power. The former is the account given by the Athenian radicals of the origin of the Peloponnesian war; in which, however, judging from the conduct of Pericles historically, there does not appear to have been any foundation.

Ειτα Περικλης, φοβηθεις μη μειτασχη της ψυχης,
Της φυσεις ὑμων δειδοικως και τον αυτοδαξ τροπον,

Πριν παθειν τι δεινον, αυτος εξιφλειτη ξεν πολιν,
Εμβαλων σφενδηρα μικρον Μεγαρικου ψηφισματος,
Εξιφυσησει γαρ τοσουτον πολεμον, ὡστε τῳ κακῳ
Πανταις Ἑλληνας δακρυσαι.

Pax, 606, et seq.

The other is a caricature (scarcely a caricature after all) of the frivolity of the circumstances out of which a war could be got up at Athens.

Φερ, ει Λακεδαιμονιων τις απαλιυσας σκαφιν
Ἀπεδοτο φρυγας, κυγιδιον Σειριφιον,
Εκαθησθ' αν εν δομοισιν; η πολλου γε δει·
Και καρτα μεν σ' αν ευθεως καθειλκεσε
Τριακοσιους νεως· νυν δ' αν ἡ πολις βλεπει
Θορυβου στρατιωτων· κ. τ. λ.

Acharn. 537, et seq.

Note Y, Page 141.

Aristophanes has made the love of litigation in the Athenian character the subject of a farce, entitled "the Wasps," which, although among the dullest of his works, contains one or two admirable comic scenes, and much valuable information, respecting the Athenian litigiousness. It appears from a passage about the 800th line of the play, that, at an early period of the Athenian commonwealth, every head of a family was

the judge of his own household or clan, and, according to the custom of administering justice at the gate, to which there are so many allusions in ancient literature, had a δικαστηριδιον μικρον πανυ, πανταχου προ των θυρων, 803. The institution of the court of the Areopagus, which is referred to a very early period in the monarchy, was the first step to supersede this patriarchal administration of justice; out of which, however, the original seeds of future litigiousness were probably developed. The judicial system of Solon placed a great proportion of this department of power in the hands of the people, which was gradually extended along with the increase of the democratical system till it became absolute. Pericles encouraged the litigious system, by introducing payment of the jurymen; and, in order that the gain might be more extensive, the number of dicasts was greatly increased. In each of the ten courts, there were frequently juries of five-hundred, and, in the supreme court of Heliæa, in which all the divisions met together, the number of dicasts sometimes amounted to six thousand. Thus the number of citizens engaged, the gain received, the love of excitement gratified, and, above all, the sense of importance and power implied in the discharge of their judicial functions, made the love of trials, or, as Wieland calls it, the process-fever, a ruling passion in the latter ages of the republic.

Οἱ μὲν γαρ τεττιγες ἵνα μηθ' ἡ δυο
Επι των πραδων ἀδουσι· Αθηναιοι δ' ἀει
Επι των δικων ἀδουσι πασας τον βιον.

Aves, 39—41.

The reader may consult the description of the advantages and enjoyments of a dicast, particularly as his occupations gratified the love of power, which Philocleon gives from line 549 to 649 of the Vespæ. There can be little doubt, however, that the power of individual citizens in the dicasteria was less than it appeared, and that these were the means by which the demagogues contrived most powerfully to affect their own purposes, and promote their own aggrandizement. This is demonstrated at great length in the reply of Bdelycleon to the speech of Philocleon above referred to. The very names which the poet gives his characters shew what was his opinion of the use which the profligate Cleon made of the judicial system.

Κλεωνι ταυτ' αγγελλετε,

exclaims the chorus of law-suit-loving wasps;

Και κελευετ' αυτον ἡκειν,
Ὡς τ' ἀνδρα μισοκολακ'
Οντα, κατακολουμενον,
Ὁστις λεγων τοιδ' ἐυφρεν
Ὡς δικας χρη μη δικαζειν.

Vesp. 409, et seq.

Note Z, Page 142.

The pernicious race of sophists were not more the promoters than the produce of the corrupted state of national manners at Athens. The great object of their system and the prime reason of their popularity was just their undertaking to justify by argument the principles which Athens obeyed in practice, and transmute the dictates of national ambition into those of scientific reason. We have seen in what manner, out of the unbridled patriotism of the national character, there naturally grew a total perversion of the ideas of right and wrong; and we find, on more than one occasion, the maxim that "might makes right," avowed by the nation as its governing principle of action, in the speech, for example, of the Athenian ambassadors at Sparta immediately before the commencement of the Peloponnesian war. (Thucyd. i. 76.) Now this is neither more nor less than the characteristic principle of the sophistical theory. Protagoras, Prodicus, Gorgias, Polus, Thrasymachus, Hippias, had all their distinctive specialities of opinion, and peculiar modes of viewing and of treating the various subjects which attracted their notice. But in this opinion, as the discriminating tenet of their school, they all agreed, that there is no essential distinction be-

tween truth and falsehood, right and wrong; and that expediency supplies the only rational law of opinion and of conduct. The reader will find these principles maintained with unblushing boldness, and with no small ingenuity and eloquence, by Callicles in Plato's Gorgias, and by Thrasymachus in the Republic. Ἡ δε γε, οιμαι, says the one, φυσις αυτη αποφαινοι αν, ὁτι δικαιον εστιν τον αμεινω του χειρονος πλεον εχειν, και τον δυνατωτερον του αδυνατωτερου. Tom. i. p. 484. Φημι γαρ εγω, says the other, ειναι το δικαιον ουκ αλλο τι, η το του κρειττονος ξυμφερον. Tom. ii. p. 338.; and again, τουτ' ουν εστιν, ὁ λεγω, εν ἁπασαις ταις πολεσι τουτο ειναι δικαιον, το της καθεστηκυιας αρχης ξυμφερον. Tom. ii. p. 339. Proceeding on this principle of having no principle, the sophists found themselves at liberty to pander both to public and to private profligacy; they invented a flagitious system of logic and rhetoric, by which they professed themselves ready to vindicate or condemn any thing whatever, and successively to prove the affirmative and negative of the same proposition. And it is not wonderful, therefore, that in a state where perpetual inconsistency, endless debate, and rottenness of principle, afforded them such ample scope, their arts should for a time at least have enjoyed a boundless popularity; that these traders in wisdom, falsely so called, should have carried on a very lucrative commerce;—these "hireling hunters of the rich and young; should have ensnared unnumber-

ed victims in their toils,—these quack-professors in intellectual medicine should have doubled the malady in the constitution of the state which yielded them their wealth and fame. *

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* Sophistæ appellabantur ii qui ostentationis aut quæstus causâ philosophantur. Cic. Quæst. Acad. ii. 23.—Τα μαθηματα καπηλευοντες. Plat. in Protag. tom. i. p. 224. Νεων και πλουσιων εμμισθοι θηρευται. Plat. Theæt. tom. i. p. 221. Ιατροτεχναι. Aristoph. Nub. 332.

FINIS.

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